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EDITORIAL NOTES

ON the second Thursday in May *The Times* published a summary of a Leslie Stephen lecture delivered at Cambridge by Professor (though the term seems odd on this context) A. E. Housman. The title of the lecture was *The Name and Nature of Poetry*; he said the right things and he was the man to say them. He has seldom allowed himself to speak in public about the things he cares for most, and his poems have been "few but roses." There has been a lovely disdain in his silence as in his speech. But since he *was* asked to deliver this annual lecture he delivered it: and he certainly said "what oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed." He told the straight truth about poetry: and it came best from him as being unchallengeably a very great lyric poet and now, alas, almost the senior of all our poets.

The All-Clear

THE *Times* summary was, we found, eagerly read and cherished by all sorts and conditions of people whom we had never suspected of an interest in such matters. It was like a bugle-call, or the All-Clear signal after an air-raid: the population stirred again, saying "Thank Heaven *that's* over!" For, during at least ten years, the field of poetry and of poetical criticism has been invaded by swarms of people who haven't the least conception as to what poetry is, and who have affixed the name to things which have no relation at all to what has been called poetry through all the long past. Dons, who would have been better employed (though actually unscientific minds perhaps ought not to be employed there either) in psychological laboratories, have peeped and botanized over masterpieces, trying to analyse the unanalysable with no reference to emotion or imagination; and a swarm of alleged poets and critics, dull and solemn, have arisen who test poems by their intellectual content—their own intellects not usually being either subtle or profound—though in some circles a lack of humour and feeling seems to be taken as proof

of profundity. The few good poets have asked themselves when the nuisance would be abated. The many who respond to poetry have been bewildered, wondering whether the literary world was mad or themselves : particularly as almost the whole of the literary press seemed to have gone over to dyspepsia, formlessness, and the notion that the Muse was meant to be the servant of notions, philosophical or political or ethical. They are all breathing more freely now.

Plus Ca Change

THERE is nothing new in the phenomenon that we are resisting. Parnassus has been invaded before by persons with no ears (save, as Swinburne said of Furnivall, long ones), by ingenious prestidigitators and didacticists. The full lecture by Mr. Housman lies before us as we write. He says :

I said that the legitimate meanings of the word poetry were themselves so many as to embarrass the discussion of its nature. All the more reason why we should not confound confusion worse by investing the term to licentious use and affixing it either to dissimilar things already provided with names of their own, or to new things for which new names should be invented.

There was a whole age of English in which the place of poetry was usurped by something very different which possessed the proper and specific name of wit ; wit not in its modern sense, but as defined by Johnson, " a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike." Such discoveries are no more poetical than anagrams ; such pleasure as they give is purely intellectual, and intellectually frivolous ; but this was the pleasure principally sought and found in poems by the intelligentsia of fifty years and more of the seventeenth century. Some of the writers who purveyed it to their contemporaries were, by accident, considerable poets, and though their verse was generally inharmonious, and apparently cut into lengths and tied into faggots by deaf mathematicians, some little of their poetry was beautiful and even superb.

The names mentioned by Mr. Housman are few. Donne and the Metaphysicals are plainly aimed at in the last paragraph. " Donne," said Ben Jonson, " for not keeping of measure, deserved hanging." He was a great man and, in flashes, a great poet : but the sentence is still valid, and Jonson might have added that Donne is often foully and carelessly obscure, and that he usually forgot sound and form so much in his concentration upon intellectual content that he might just as well, or better, have been writing in prose.

Dryden

DRYDEN is mentioned by name. That there should be a return (though there can never be a popular return) to this great and vigorous writer of verse and prose is only rational and desirable. There is always, happily, in a young generation an impulse to return to and even over-praise authors whom their elders have neglected. But although both

Dryden and Pope might have been greater poets had they been born in another age we ought not to let mere fashion influence us to the extent of seeing them out of perspective. With perfect good sense, and in perfect prose, Mr. Housman tells the truth about those two :

When I am drinking Barolo stravecchio in Turin, I am not disturbed, nor even visited by the reflexion that there is better wine in Dijon. But yet there is, and there was better poetry, not reckoning Milton's even in the perverse and crooked generation preceding Dryden. Thinly scattered on that huge dross-heap, the Caroline Parnassus, there were tiny gems of purer ray ; and the most genuine of Dryden's own poetry is to be found, never more than four lines at once, seldom more than two, in his early, unshapely, and wearisome poem the *Annus Mirabilis*.

His great successor, whose Iliad was a more dazzling and seductive example of the false manner than any work of Dryden's own, and became, as Coleridge said, "the main source of our pseudo-poetic diction"—Pope, though he threw open to others the wide gate, did not long keep them company on the broad way, which led them to destruction. He came to recognise, and for the last twenty years of his life he steadily followed, the true bent of his genius, in satire or disputation : into these he put no larger quantity and no rarer quality of poetry than they could assimilate, and he made no more ascents in the balloon. . . . his versification, though more evenly good, did not reach the buoyant excellence of Dryden's at his best. What lifts him nearest to true poetry is sincere inward ardour. Pope had a soul in his body, an aery and fiery particle, where Dryden had nothing but a lump of clay, and he can be nobler than Dryden can. But not even in the Elegy to the memory of an unfortunate lady does the fire burn clear of smoke, and truth of emotion do itself full justice in naturalness and purity of diction.

How it all needs saying ! Thirty years ago all the pundits used to quote Keats's rebellious lines about the miserable prosy tribe who followed the standard of "one Boileau." They damned a great century in a paragraph, and naturally, in the end, produced a reaction. But the reaction has gone too far. There was a man in the eighteenth century who wrote a work called *Immorality : A Poem in Three Books* : there has been a dangerous tendency in that direction since the War. As Mr. Housman says, any ideas on doctrines may give extra value and interest to a poem. But they cannot be the centre of it. "Look in thy heart and write," said Sir Philip Sidney : the emotions and the senses, magic and music, these are the things to which Mr. Housman recalled attention. And his most brutal assault on the Brahmins was a reference to "the pit of the stomach" as the centre of poetry's appeal.

Six Centuries of English Literature

SOME of Mr. Housman's allusions reminded us of the six volumes Scapably edited by Professor Richard Ferrar Patterson, covering the subject of English literature from 1370 to 1920, which we have on our desk. These books differ from the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, in that they are a compilation of extracts from the writers themselves, each preceded by a concise and readable biographical introduction.

Although we may deplore the reading of extracts rather than the complete works, there is no doubt that under present conditions, where space for books is often scarce (to say nothing of the wherewithal to buy them), and time is limited, *Six Centuries of English Literature** will prove its worth, and many people will be grateful to Professor Patterson for the considerable work he has done in the preparation of these volumes. Each volume covers approximately a century; each has an introduction—by G. K. Chesterton, Emile Legonis, Stephen Gwynn and others.

J. C. SQUIRE

**Six Centuries of English Literature*. Blackie & Son. 12s. 6d. per volume.



BATHERS

Woodcut by M. L. WETHERED

NOTES AND NEWS

WITH regret, we mention that no review of *Richard Coeur de Lion*, a very recent addition—and in our opinion a valuable addition—to Peter Davies' "Five Shilling Series" of biographies, appears in this issue. Our reviewer of biographies, Mr. Clennell Wilkinson, was prevented from doing it by the fact that he wrote the book. It will be reviewed by Professor Francis Clark in our July number.

ON May 13th, Mr. Albert Coates conducted the final performance for this season, of *The Snow Maiden*, at Sadler's Wells Theatre. The production of such an opera is no light matter, for it makes heavy demands on scenery, ballets, and cast, so that the Vic-Wells operatic company have won our admiration once again for their enterprise, and too, for their actual achievement. Ninette de Valois was responsible for the ballets, and Elizabeth Polunin for the costumes. Mr. Clive Carey produced. It appears that *The Snow Maiden* was heard then for the first time in England. Again, it is of interest to learn that the son of Rimsky-Korsakov is arranging for photographs of the production to be shown in the Museum at Moscow.

WE have received an announcement of *The New Oxford Outlook*. This magazine is to replace the former *Oxford Outlook*, which, the editors explained, was handicapped by a yearly change of its editorial direction, which made it difficult to achieve a real continuity of purpose and character. The review will be published three times a year, and will appear on the second Friday after the commencement of each full term. It is edited by Messrs. Richard Crossman, Gilbert Highet, and Derec Khan. Basil Blackwell, 49, Broad Street, Oxford, is the publisher.

THE collection of primitive African Sculpture shown at the Lefevre Galleries last month aroused a deal of interest. Several of the pieces called for really serious attention, but others were merely grotesque, and apart from the fact that they gave evidence of a Negro culture which once existed, had little artistic value. However, the directness, simplicity, and use of line, admirably controlled, often combined to produce a peculiar beauty and grace. It was of especial interest that Mr. Jacob Epstein's work should be showing at the same time as this exhibition, and the obvious comparison sprang to mind—from which Mr. Epstein emerged grim, and perhaps not wholly triumphant. The Africans were every bit as vigorous as Mr. Epstein, and rather more subtle.

THE Jury entrusted by the Royal Institute of British Architects with the Award of the London Architectural Medal have announced their award for the year 1932, in favour of Lloyds Bank Headquarters, Lombard Street Elevation, designed by Sir John Burnet and Partners, with Messrs. Campbell Jones, Sons and Smithers. This medal is awarded annually to the architect who has designed a building of merit completed during the three preceding years within the County of London.

POETRY

SIX

Preludes

I

THE picture world, that falls apart, and leaves
 a snowflake on the hand, a star of ice,
 a hillside, a dead leaf

the picture world,
 the lost and broken child's book, whence we treasure
 one picture, torn and soiled, the faded colours
 precious because dimmed, clear because faded,

the picture world, which is ourselves speaking,
 of yesterday, and yesterday, and yesterday,
 the huge world promised in the bud of May,
 the leaf, the stone, the rain, the cloud,
 the face most loved, the hand most clung to—

must we go back to this and have this always :
 remember what was lost or what was torn :
 replace the missing with a better dream
 built from the broken fabric of our wills—
 thus to admit our present is our past,
 and in one picture find unaltered heaven—

or, shall we be angelic, close brave wings,
 fall through the fathomless, feel the cold void,
 and sound the darkness of the newly known ?—
 —To face the terror in this rain that comes
 across the drowned world to the drowning window ;
 be ignorant of rain, this unknown rain ;
 unknown and wild as the world was to god
 when first he opened eyes—ah surely this
 were nobler answer than the glib speech of habit,
 the well-worn words and ready phrase, that build
 comfortable walls against the wilderness ?
 Seeing, to know the terror of seeing : being,
 to know the terror of being : knowing, to know
 the dreadfulness of knowledge :

Come, let us drown in rain,
cry out and drown in this wild single drop,
sound the pure terror on steadfast wings, and find
in death itself the retrospective joy
held, like a picture-book, in a drowned hand.

II

Still the same function, still the same habit come,
the endless algebra that marks the mind,
a leads to be and b to c ; we wait
in vain for change. No sudden Clytemnestra
walks from the scene and with her takes the world—

or so the sentry said. And watched the moon
pull half the desert downward as she went,
involved in silvered trees and dunes and towers
shadows of spears and what not. Moons and moons—
all gone in one, and all the tides gone too,
salt blood, salt water. What's left but dark. What's left
but night, night which is function of the day ;
which is in turn a function of the night.
Or so the sentry said.

And saw his feet,
sandalled, and semi-prehensile, on the sand,
gripping the moonchilled sand and then releasing,
forward and back along the wall's foot, turning
under the fig-tree. Lately it had a shadow,
but now had none. And " a-prime " leads to " b-prime,"
build how you will. Nuisance, that there should be
no wildness left in nature—no chance of dicethrow
to change the world, or changed then change it back—
the two plus two makes eight—

Clytemnestra
walked on the terrace, when the moon had sunk,
and licked her little finger. Tasted blood.
Addressed herself : Woman, you've changed the world,
you should have been a man. And henceforth men—
use them, use them ! Smiled, and walked in the dark,
and heard, below the wall, the sentry's cough.

III

What without speech we knew and could not say
what without thought we did and could not change
violence of the hand which the mind thought strange
let us take these things into another world
another dream

what without love we touched pronouncing good
what without touch we loved and gave no sign
violence of spirit which only spirit knew divine
let us take these things into another world
another sleep

walk with me heliotrope fly with me sparrow
come beating of my heart and learn how life is narrow
how little, and ill, will be remembered by tomorrow
let us give our lives into another world
another hand

where like old rocks we shall be heaped forgetful
or waste away like stars in fiery stillness
no clock with mortal cry to speak our illness
let us take our deaths into another time
another god

come girl, come golden-breasted girl, and walk
on the so silent and sun-sandalled path
between the foremath and the aftermath
let us hurl our joy into another chaos another wrath
and make it love

what without speech we knew we then shall say
and all our violence will there be gay
what without thought we do will be but play
and our unspoken love as bright as day
and we shall live.

IV

Then it was that the child first spoke to me
the innocent the clear in the clear morning
the young voice finding the first sounds of joy
first sounds of grief of terror of despair
the weak hand holding mine, that was no stronger,
as if for guidance, who was my guide, though younger

so that we walked together in the cool garden
 he that was innocent but knew it not
 who in the thrush's song heard terror and delight
 and a wide fear in the wide wave of light
 joy and sorrow in the coolness of the shade
 strength in my hand my hand that was afraid

myself the guilty one alas who tried to learn
 new innocence by giving back my shame
 into those eyes of laughter which became
 guilty and frightened as I learned new joy
 alas alas that thus the garden way
 leads the old footstep with the young astray

he into a cloud walking I into a sun
 forgive me child that thus we become one
 forgive the things that teach us thus to cherish
 the dread exchange by which we love and perish
 forgive us trees forgive us garden path
 that grief buys happiness and love buys wrath

under the thrush's voice walking back slowly
 the holy innocence became unholy
 the younger hand grew older and stronger
 the world-stained hand grew fairer and younger
 together sharing the adulterous union
 which is the dreadful secret of communion

now let the murderer hide shameful eyes
 behind young wings new come from paradise
 and let this angel take and hold the knife
 bewildered by the murder which is life
 thus in the middle noon to come together
 stained hand and immaculate feather.

V

If one voice, not another, must speak first,
 out of the silence, the stillness, the preceding—
 speaking clearly, speaking slowly, measuring calmly
 the heavy syllables of doubt, or of despair—
 speaking passionately, speaking bitterly, hunger or hope
 ordering the words that are like sounds of flame—:
 if one speaks first, before that other or the third,
 out of the silence bringing the dark message,
 the grave and great acceptance of the rock,
 the huge world, held in the huge hand of faith :

and if it says, I hold the world like this ;
here in the light, amid these crumbling walls ;
here in the half-light, the deceptive moment ;
here in the darkness like a candle lifted— :
take it, relieve me of it, bear it away ;
have it, now and forever, for your own ;
this that was mine, this that my voice made mine,
this that my word has shaped for you—

if this voice speaks before us, speaks before
ourselves can speak, challenging thus the dark ;
waking the sleeping watcher from his sleep,
altering the dreamer's dream while still he dreams ;
so that on waking—ah, what despair he knows !
to learn that while he slept the world was made—
made by that voice, and himself made no less,
and now inalterably curved forever—

yes, if to wake, to cease to dream, be this,
to face a self made ready while we slept,
shaped in the world's shape by the single voice—
if thus we wake too late and find ourselves
already weeping, already upon the road
that climbs past shame and pain to crucifixion—
seeing at once, with eyes just opened, the world,
vast, bright, and cruciform, on which so soon
ascending we must die—

and to look backward,
but know no turning back ; to go forward,
even as we turn our faces to the past
still gazing downward from the hill we climb,
searching the dark for that strange dream we had,
which the voice altered and broke—

ah, can it comfort us,
us helpless, us thus shaped by a word,
sleepwalking shadows in the voice-shaped world,
ah can it comfort us that we ourselves
will bear the word with us, we too, we too,
to speak, again, again, again,—
ourselves the voice for those not yet awakened,—
altering the dreams of those who dream, and shaping,
while still they sleep, their inescapable pain—?

VI

Went home so, laughing, the foolish one, who knew
 (or thought he knew, and thinking is to know)
 the bitter, brief, and bright, the morning's madness,
 the evening's folly. So took home with him
 a card, a glove, a letter, and the word
 spoken and laughed at and denied, the word
 born in the heart, but stillborn : the denial
 of grassblade's heart.

Has the grassblade a heart ?
 morning a pulse ? the human hand a meaning ?
 Was there a purpose in my name this morning ?
 This is a day of dreadful commonplace ;
 of news and newspapers and date and action ;
 I brushed my teeth, and drank my coffee ; saw
 sunlight among the dishes, spoke the word
 that breakfast dictates ; saw the immortal worm
 under the table and beneath the world,
 working his comic passage toward death.

How there, old fellow, and have you come again,
 you that I saw beneath my fingernail,
 who ate my sweetheart's eyelid and her eye—
 who ruin the daylight and delight in dark,
 follow me to my birth and to my death,
 sit in my breath and chuckle in my heart—

must you be always where delight is brightest
 let fall your seed beneath the hawthorn blossom,
 scream behind rainbows ? I have seen your wings.
 Know you. You are that fellow who was born
 under my name, but with a different meaning :

you are that fellow whose precocious death
 leads me to graveyards in the glare of noon,
 and murmurs murder in the bridal bed.
 Lie down : we are absolved : we go from here
 to wider emptiness, and such dispersals
 of death, and cruelty, and the death of pain,
 as no life knew before, or will know after.

CONRAD AIKEN

TWO POEMS

*Going ! Going ! Gone !**A CASTLE IN THE NORTH*

THE bidders and the auctioneers have gone.
 The duller bits of sandwich deck the stone.
 Here in the Baron's Hall, upon this hearth
 Beside a fire-place thrice as tall as I,
 Carven with shields, at last I sit alone.
 Here for long hours was laughter and much mirth ;
 Heraldic popinjays have danced their days.

But still in perpendicular windows tall
 As thirty feet, the bright green popinjays
 One foot in air are here,
 And shed light colours on the Baron's Hall.

And though the first lord kneels no longer down
 At Richard the Second's feet in rosy gown,
 But's put into the corner like a child,
 He'll find a home, for high were bids and bets,
 He'll find a sausage king in Massachusetts
 With his contemporaries.

" Lot 200 : a King ! I beg your pardon,
 It's only : ' Earl of Surrey in a garden.'
 Holbein's Court Lady next—274,
 Henry the VII and Sir Thomas More.
 Lot 5 : A rug given by the Aga Khan
 To Queen Victoria ! No ! from Ispahan !
 With flowers and gold gazelles ! Lunch time, a pause ! "

They'll come tomorrow to unscrew the doors,
 And strew more paper on the echoing floors,
 Take down the earliest warriors at last.
 And I shall say : " The past is but the past,
 And this, I hope, is the first year of grace."
 Dance, popinjays you, the death-duty race !
 The wind is up, your shadows now are cast
 Most fancifully about ;
 Play up for all your lords and see them out !
 He who lost life for Pilgrimage of Grace ;
 And statesmen, and the little boys in lace.

The castle's square of golden sandstone built ;
 Four walls, four towers above low beautiful hills ;
 Now black from chimney-stacks and slag, the Weir,
 In place of salmon, welters down with silt.
 But still above it dance wild daffodils.

The great north country's dour,
 But claims a burn once crystal, in cloven dene,
 Where springs in April likelihood of green,
 Most thickly wooded, where, beneath the towers,
 Standing at moonlight or in sunset hours,
 This castle is all castles to her or him
 Rocked in the cradle of the brothers Grimm.

But when the ivy eats at all men's cost,
 I'll come to the turrets again like a thin ghost,
 To find the harebells springing from the towers,
 And yellow wild wall-flowers,
 And that barn-owl within an archer's slit :
 She rears her young in stairways that are lost ;
 I saw her first by starlight in that slit
 I had not known.
 She, and the raven, shall inherit it,
 Shall make their nests in scoops of golden stone.

I shall come here again, shaking and old,
 Some day of storm when lights of sea-gulls glance,
 And on the stone escutcheons by glad chance
 The naughty popinjays may lead a dance.
 The castle will be black then so I'm told,
 Save where it crumbles to reveal the gold.

There go the miners, many with bandy legs,
 (They crouch in corridors below the skies),
 Black as the niggers, but with vital eyes,
 With " long-dogs," and a clutch of plovers' eggs.

I dare not say " Goodnight."
 They not as friends will answer me " Goodnight."
 Still stays above the hills the smoky light,
 Where once the sunset shone
 And they were shepherds, putting to their sleep
 The ewes in lamb.

And even the lost sheep.

Going ! Going ! Gone !

The Old Mill

WITHIN the bedroom fattened three hundred years
 By caking whitewash cracking to a fall
 In gradual angles to a sound of weirs
 There hung a cardboard text upon a wall :
 " Just as I am, without one plea."
 And there I heard her crying in the rains
 That brought the lime leaves spattering to the roof :
 Catherine to Heathcliffe beating on the panes.
 " She'll cut her hands ! Oh save her, Emily ! "

And there by windy candles shadows leapt :
 Marionettes from Java, long-nose, leap-frog :
 And I read Wuthering Heights who should have slept ;
 And Toby the pug dog
 With ruffle round his chin
 Ate up, designed for me, the milk and bread,
 Ate his poor crustie with a sense of sin ;
 And I who held him communed with the dead.

By day in the mill three brothers in floury coats
 Winnowed the barley on a threshing-floor,
 Their lashes white, and lighted by the slats
 Of those uneven planks that made the door :
 Took lief of flaxen waterfalls of oats,
 And heaps of rosy bran.

Three sister cats,
 Smut and Snow and the small Tortoiseshell,
 Ranged the piled sacks, panthers in tropic fell,
 Scaling the timbers to the rafters blind,
 To where perpetual breeze became a wind ;
 Where sunset lights were blown into a flame,
 So that I following to that storey came.

There in full sound below a house of beams,
 As never I had heard, nor again will hear,
 Upon a star-point of the meeting streams
 Force-water turned the wheel ; the mill pulsated
 Above the mill-race, slap upon the weir.

Below, slim-seen, obliquely translated,
 Three brothers in a wide and wooden well
 Of light beside three grinds, in flour fair
 Wavered in moted rays of the flying air
 That filled the atmosphere, above, beyond.

Triangle trinity : nor can I tell
 If now returning I should find them there,
 The three cats mousing, and the brothers blond,
 Nor I myself upon a ladder stair,
 Dangling above the axle, glad again
 To watch a sifting of the chaff and grain.

But I returned again
 To watch beside the white, the steady weir :
 But uprights stood on floors of that old mill,
 Between the planks was left a little grain,
 The footway of the undemolished stair
 Was tilted slightly still,
 But stayed aloft in evening light and led into the air.

The uprights crossed, and like a cross they seemed,
 Awry as one on Golgotha they were.
 I know not if I dreamed ;
 But workmen swore and battered on the hinges,
 And with a driver spun a screw-head out.
 And flung the cross-beams here and there about.
 Then working over-time drank deep of ales,
 And in a suddenly darkening world
 Wrenched out the deeper nails.

But I returned a third time to the place :
 No longer flickered silver Sallow Wood,
 But flame and chimneys, there a factory stood :
 A cotton-mill beside a blackened race,
 Where once the red-fin dace
 In close formation and small elegant schools
 Faced to the foam, or wavered in the pools.

This river saw the gentle, the dark filly
 Gallop the buttercups and knew the lily,
 That wild gold water one of sideling pond,
 Whose leaves are maps of Ireland or Ind,
 Turning their pale reverses to the wind,
 Whose sweating stamens are stigmata, nails.

I lean upon the dank, the rusty rails.

I'll put thee, River, to the imperative !
 Keep thou the time when I no longer live !
 Thou stinks't of soot that held the evening gold,
 Thy chapter is not told !

Suffer the passing flashlights of the cars,
Who once held all the heaven and all her stars,
Between thy meadow banks all heaven flowing,
Stars in their courses no wise over blowing
As in clear gales, as when
They seem on earth on giddy nights to men.
The moon lapped lightly here below the lime :
Infinity was easy, truth a rime.
Thy stirring lily cups I scarce could see,
But saw moon-craters mirrored here in thee.
And heard them cradled, washt by song to keep
The mercy of their sleep.

I went again a fourth time to the mill,
To see the black and broken windows there,
As in deserted mills of Lancaster.
How do I know
Those tattered windows are dead children's eyes,
Black hollows staring at a pack of lies ?
All children died a century ago.

Factories had gone
The stream was crystal, so to me it seemed.
Masters of Progress, have I died or dreamed ?
The old water-mill was there, but built of glass,
Wherethro' I saw men's shapes pass on and pass :
A mill of glass beside a crystal pond,
Imponderable, three cats, three brothers blond.

DOROTHY WELLESLEY

ON LANTERN HILL

By REGINALD REA

I

THE Madras Mail halted at Radura station and a white man descended from the train. Coolies collected his luggage from the van. They asked him where he wished to go. The white man didn't seem to know. He felt a little lost, a stranger in a strange land. He wondered if Radura possessed a hotel. He decided to inquire. He saw a native approaching, dressed in European clothes. The native saluted the white man.

"Master," he said in English. "Please excuse. Has master just travelled from Colombo?"

"Yes."

"Is master the new master of Lantern Hill?"

"Yes."

The native beamed. He produced a letter from his pocket. He gave it to the white man.

"This," he said, "is for master."

The letter was addressed to James Loring, Esq. It read :

Neville's Cross Estate,
Mandapetty Post Office,
Radura District,
South India.

15th February, 192-

Dear Loring,

I am advised you are arriving from Colombo to take charge of Lantern Hill, next door to Neville's Cross. As I expect you know, I have been looking after the estate (under an agreement between our respective agents) until your arrival, and you can take over whenever you wish.

Bearer of this letter, Veerasamy, is head clerk on Lantern Hill. I have sent him to meet and help you in any way he can. He is a trustworthy man.

You can get to Neville's Cross by car from Radura. Hope to see you some time to-morrow and that you'll stay with me before taking charge of Lantern Hill.

Salaams,

Yours sincerely,

R. MAXWELL.

The letter heartened Loring. It was like a friendly hand-grip in a foreign land. He felt he'd like Maxwell. He liked his style. Short, and to the point. No muckin' about. Loring looked at Veerasamy.

"Thanks, Veerasamy," he said. "Now where do I stow my kit and sleep the night?"

"In the station retiring-rooms, master. There is no other place. The rest-house is bad at Radura. Full of filth and all manner of uncleanness. Will master please step this way? I have booked him a room."

Loring followed Veerasamy. The luggage coolies followed Loring. They walked along the crowded platform, then up a stair in the station building. There was a broad, roofed-in veranda at the head of the stair. Bedrooms opened off the veranda.

Veerasamy ushered Loring into a room. The coolies put down the luggage. Loring paid the coolies. Veerasamy escorted them from the room. Then he returned.

"Does master approve the room I chose?" he inquired. "O thank you, master. It is a very clean room, is it not? For the purposes of cleanliness there is a bathroom attached to the room. Oah, yes. Now master would like some tea. I will send the servant from the refreshment-quarters."

After tea, Loring consulted Veerasamy as to the next day's procedure. Veerasamy explained the procedure. A hired motor car would call at the station at ten o'clock. Master's light luggage would be placed in the motor car. Master's heavy luggage would follow by bullock cart. The motor car would proceed to Mandapetty rest house, fifty miles from Radura. There master would take his lunch. After lunch, they would finish their journey. It was forty miles from Mandapetty to Neville's Cross. Was there anything else that master wished to ascertain? No. Then Veerasamy would wish master good-night.

II

Richard Maxwell, the manager of Neville's Cross, was a short, stout man with a pleasant easy-going manner. He had a round red face and blue childlike eyes. His hair was straw-coloured. He was an exact opposite to Loring, who was lean, dark and active. Maxwell liked to consider himself an onlooker at life; all he wanted, he said, was peace and quiet. He got them on Neville's Cross; for life was placid on Neville's Cross and in marked contrast to life on Lantern Hill.

On the evening of Loring's arrival at his bungalow, they sat on the veranda with a mountain range (it was called the Periamalley Hills) facing them and below them the dull green canopy of the Neville's Cross estate. When Loring had taken a drink to wash away the dust of his journey, he asked Maxwell to tell him all about Lantern Hill. Maxwell looked curiously at Loring when he asked this, and said there wasn't very much to tell. He had supervised Lantern Hill for the past two months since the departure of the late manager, Henry Jones. Things on Lantern Hill, he said, were much the same as they had been before.

"What exactly," Loring asked, "d'you mean by that? Good or bad?"

Maxwell looked at Loring and laughed.

"I see," he said, "you're out to learn the truth, the 'ole truth, an' nothing but the truth. So help you God. But before I answer, I want to ask you something. Tell me, Loring, what made you take up a lonely job like Lantern Hill?"

"Lucre," Loring said. "On Lantern Hill I shall get twice as much as I did on my Ceylon billet. Besides, I was only an assistant there, an' likely

to remain one. When I was offered a manager's job on Lantern Hill, I leapt at it. D'you wonder?"

Maxwell lit a cigarette. He was a great smoker. He always carried in true planter fashion a fifty tin of navy cut cigarettes in his coat pocket.

"No," he said. "I don't. It was only natural. But what did they say in Colombo about Lantern Hill?"

"You mean Robertson Brothers, the agents, who gave me the job?"

"Yes."

Loring told him. Harvey Maclaren, the senior partner, had emphasized the fact that Lantern Hill was a difficult proposition. It was a lonely job miles from white men, except for the European manager on Neville's Cross. And the estate was in a poor condition. The tapping was poor, there were any amount of weeds and a highly unsatisfactory labour force. This condition of things was due to slack supervision. Robertson Brothers had tried manager after manager, but all had been intimidated by the difficulty and loneliness of the job. The last manager, Henry Jones, was a complete failure. He looked continually on the wine when it was red.

"So he was sacked for drink," Loring ended. "I suppose that's true?"

"Yes. True bill. Poor old Henry. Did Maclaren say anything else?"

"Only that I was expected to pull round the estate. If I did so, my name was made with Robertson Bros. By the way, what sort of bloke was Jones?"

Maxwell did not reply. He sat and smoked and contemplated the sunset on the Periamalley Hills. The sun was setting behind the hills, and the hilltops showed black and sharply outlined against the blood-red light. Red sky at night, Maxwell thought; shepherd's delight. Another nice fine bright sunny day to-morrow. *As usual.* Then he seemed to remember that Loring had asked a question.

"Jones?" he said. "Oh, not a bad bloke when sober. Unfortunately he was nearly always tight. Y'see, he beat the bottle all round the clock. Week in, week out. No rest, no recreation. You can't last long at that pace in this Elysian clime. But I think it was the Lantern Hill labour force that finished Henry Jones. Poor devil, they were always at him. Oh, they're a sweet collection, the Lantern Hill coolies—*your* coolies—they're the sweepings of Asia. Jail-birds, wasters, bullies, bolters from every estate in South India. My stars, Loring, I don't want to shake you—but you've got your work cut out to manage that mob."

"So it seems," Loring said, with a sinking heart. "I expect I'll make an awful mess of things. Well, one can but do one's best. If I succeed, my name is made. If I fail, I'm only another casualty on the Lantern Hill managers' list."

III

On the next day, Loring took charge of Lantern Hill. It consisted of six hundred acres of rubber and was bordered on three sides by dense jungle and on the fourth by Neville's Cross. The labour force numbered some three hundred Tamil coolies, divided into gangs under their own headmen.

After a thorough inspection of Lantern Hill, Loring realised its condition was more serious than he had anticipated.

The estate was full of weeds and silted drains and broken terraces, and the rubber trees had been hacked by the tapping coolies as if they had tapped with butchers' knives. The coolies were lazy and undisciplined and their headmen insolent and inefficient. At times the headmen's attitude toward their new master made Loring tremble with anger. He swore he'd improve their manners and stop their pretty parlour tricks, such as chewing and spitting betel-nut in his presence. Did they think they could speak to a white man, chewing their filthy betel quids? Did they think they could approach him ejecting streams of red saliva? They might have done so in the days of Henry Jones. They might have done anything with that drunken waster. But they'd find their new master a very different proposition: they'd find he'd teach them all sorts of strange and surprising things. He wasn't used to slackness and inefficiency and insolence. And, by God, he wouldn't tolerate them.

Loring told Maxwell what he thought of Lantern Hill and what he intended to do. Maxwell advised him to go slowly.

"*Festina lente*, laddie, as the Latins might have said. Remember that Rome was not erected in a single perishing day. Get used to the estate before you bite its headmen in the neck. Get to know the ropes before you kick the blighters in the—ah—intestines. Oh, I know how things must irk you on Lantern Hill. It's all so different to the average well-disciplined Ceylon estate. But things are different here. For your own sake, remember that."

Maxwell pointed out that Lantern Hill was miles from anywhere, and coolies were extremely difficult to get. More difficult still to replace. If Loring dealt with a headman too hastily, he would find him and his coolie-gang walking off the estate.

"Then," he asked, "where will you be? Why, right in the mulligatawny. Short-handed you won't be able to get the work done and your Colombo agents will be the first to complain. So mark time on Lantern Hill, it'll pay you to do so. Don't strike till you've sized things up. An' when you do strike, strike like the hammers of hell. Swiftly, ruthlessly, just like a ruddy hun."

Loring followed Maxwell's advice on Lantern Hill. He went about his business slowly and carefully. The work was very bad and Loring was certain it was due to the headmen's bad example. Until the headmen mended their ways the work could not improve because the coolies imitated the headmen who were lazy and inefficient and insolent. After three weeks on Lantern Hill, Loring decided to deal with the most insolent headman. He decided to deal with Raman Kangany*.

Raman always treated Loring with veiled insolence, especially before the coolies. He chewed betel-nut in front of him; he spat red saliva in

* Headman

his presence. He never saluted Loring ; he never addressed him with any title of respect. One day he spoke rudely to Loring in front of Veerasamy who had brought him to Lantern Hill from Radura. Veerasamy liked Loring and hated Raman Kangany. When he heard Raman speak rudely he said to Loring in English :

" Master. Please excuse. But this man is insolent."

Loring looked at Raman and he looked at Veerasamy.

" Yes," he said. " He is very insolent. His day will come."

A week later Raman's day came. It came in the factory when the tappers' latex was being weighed. Loring was standing near the rubbermaker who weighed the latex. Raman Kangany was standing near Loring.

The rubbermaker weighed a girl tapper's latex. The girl's name was Mariamma. She belonged to Raman Kangany's coolie gang.

" Mariamma," the rubbermaker said, " two and three quarter pounds."

He entered the amount in the pay book opposite the girl's name.

Loring looked at Raman Kangany.

" Raman," he said, " I told you to tell the rubbermaker this girl should have no pay. Her work was very bad. She wounded five trees. Why didn't you do as I told you ? "

Raman Kangany looked at Loring.

" If the girl gets no pay," he said, " how can she live ? She can't live without pay to feed her belly. Why should she starve because she wounded five trees ? She shall wound a hundred trees before I see her starve. That, white man, is why I didn't tell the rubbermaker as you told me. The matter is finished."

Raman spat on the ground at the white man's feet. It was the final insult. Loring felt his heart beat like a drum. His breathing accelerated. He felt weak and unstrung. But he knew he must act. The crisis had come.

" Oh, no," he said to Raman. " The matter is not finished. It is just begun."

He advanced on Raman. Raman stood his ground. He was uncertain what the white man was about to do. Loring was certain what he was about to do. He did it. He smashed his fist in Raman's mouth. Raman dropped to the blow. He lay on the floor. Blood dripped from his mouth.

" *Eyah*," he cried. " O my father and my mother. O, my wife and my little ones."

Loring watched Raman, and the coolies also watched him. They stood quite still, they made no sound. The beat of the factory engine and Raman's cries seemed very loud. Then Raman stopped his crying. He raised himself on one arm. He looked at the coolies and pointed to his butchered mouth. He made queer noises through his mouth. Loring waited till Raman got to his feet. Then he sprang. He hit Raman with a cold ferocity. He hit him with both hands. *One-two*, came the blows. *One-two*.

Raman collapsed. He overturned a latex bucket in his fall. The white latex mixed with the blood that ran from his nose and mouth.

Loring ignored Raman and looked at the coolies. The coolies looked

at Loring. There was fear in their eyes ; fear of the white man and the havoc he wrought with the naked hands. Then Loring spoke.

"The work," he said, "is very bad on Lantern Hill. The coolies are lazy, the headmen are insolent. I have dealt with Raman headman for his insolence. I will not tolerate insolent headmen and lazy coolies. I will deal with them as I have dealt with Raman. It is my business to do so. It is my business to turn bad work into good. I will do it. I promise you that I will. Look at Raman headman. Remember what comes of insolence and laziness. That is all I have to say. Make way."

The coolies shrank back and Loring passed between their ranks. He left the factory and climbed the hill to his bungalow. Inside his bungalow he washed the blood from his hands.

IV

After Loring had dealt with Raman headman he dealt with the other headmen on Lantern Hill. He determined to improve the coolies' work by improving the headmen under whom they worked, and he concentrated all his energy to attain this end.

If he punished a coolie for bad work, he punished his headmen for allowing him to work badly, and he jeered and mocked at the headmen in front of their coolies. The headmen improved and the work improved, but Loring made enemies during this period of improvement.

The headmen carried on endless intrigues against him among the coolies and the estate's native staff. They tried to undermine Loring's authority, although they now treated him on the surface with the utmost respect. Violent methods also were attempted against him. Twice as he returned to his bungalow in the dusk, stones sang about his ears from enemies hidden among the rubber trees. The strain of carrying on work under these conditions had their effect on Loring's nerves. He became depressed, jumpy, short-tempered, and the complete isolation of Lantern Hill and lack of company (except for Maxwell on Neville's Cross) did not improve his well-being. He no longer thought of Henry Jones as a drunken waster. He realised now what had driven or helped to drive Jones to drink. Loring knew that without Maxwell on Neville's Cross, he would have been unable to carry on. Whenever he felt more depressed than usual he unburdened himself to Maxwell and asked for his advice. Maxwell always helped him, speaking generally in a highly indolent manner, but the advice was sound, none the less. Once when Loring thanked him he replied :

"Not at all, laddie. Not at all. It's free-gratis for what its worth. I'm an absolute tiger at giving good advice ; unfortunately, I never dam' well take it. Coupled with idleness, that's my trouble. Always has been. Always will. That's why I'm on Neville's Cross—an' likely to remain. But you're different. You'll get on in the world. You're of the bull-dog breed. In spite of present troubles, you'll succeed on Lantern Hill. Oh, believe me, you will."

Loring said he hoped Maxwell's prediction would come true ; but he

doubted it. He didn't feel in the least like a member of the bull-dog clan. In fact his heart daily sank with dread when he started off to inspect the estate in the certain knowledge he would find some fresh devilry to increase his burden. What he termed "the underseas warfare" on Lantern Hill reached a pitch of intensity some three months after he took over the estate.

He received one morning a private letter from Maclaren, the senior partner in Robertson Brothers.

The letter informed Loring that Maclaren had received an anonymous petition from Lantern Hill coolies which he enclosed. He took, of course, no notice of anonymous petitions and he hoped if Loring discovered who had sent the petition, he would deal with the sender very severely. Loring read the petition which was written in *babu* English on bazaar paper. It was addressed to Harvey Maclaren, Esquire.

Most Honoured and Respected Sir, (it began)

This is the petition of your humble coolie folk on Lantern Hill.

Sir, we endure one very tough time. We endure one Hell of a very rough passage. This new master, Loring master, is one very devilish fellow. He is one rampageous roaring tiger in search of human gore. He beats us, Sir, and assaults us. He does not hesitate to kick us in our Posterior. He makes our lives one Pandemonium with his roaring, rollicking, ramping ways.

Oh, Sir, for God's sake deliver us from this devilish fellow who undermines our constitutions. Bag and baggages remove him, Sir. He stinks in the nostrils of decent men. This is the prayer of your humble coolie folk moaning and groaning on Lantern Hill.

May your respected Honour live for ever and your Honour's Respected Lady fruit like a blooming Vine.

With an oath, Loring put the petition in his pocket. The war zone, he realised, was being extended to Colombo. He wondered who had sent the petition and who had written it. Sixty per cent. of the Lantern Hill coolies could not write in their own language their own names. Not one of them could write English. Even the English of the petition. Someone outside Lantern Hill had been employed to write the petition unless it had been written by one of the estate's native staff, and that was unlikely. The writing would be too easily traced.

Loring walked over that evening to Neville's Cross. He showed Maxwell the petition. Maxwell read it.

"The swine," he said. "They're up to their old games again. Of all the damned cowardly ways of getting at a man an anonymous petition is, I think, the worst. Y'see, no matter how distorted, how libellous it is, it generally contains some grain of truth. That's how Colombo discovered Henry was beating the bottle. That's why he got the sack. Tell me, James, have you been hammering anyone on Lantern Hill?"

Loring told him of Raman Kangany. He expected Raman or one of his friends had sent the petition. But who had written it?

That, Maxwell said, was the point. It was no use accusing Raman

without proof. Loring would be met with a flat denial. What he had to do was to find out who wrote the petition and, through the writer, who sent it. And then to deal with the criminal. Until that was done, Loring would get no peace on Lantern Hill. Petition after petition would be sent to Colombo.

"Oh, I know the swine," Maxwell added. "Believe me, I do. Now, the point is, how can you deal with this business? Who can you trust to help you? Let me think. Ah, I've got the man. Veerasamy. He's the one bloke you can trust, I think. I've a great admiration for Veerasamy. He's an absolute gent. Show him the petition. Ask him to find out who wrote it. You'll not be able to find out yourself. But he may. He's a native and knows native ways. Lord, I haven't talked so much since uncle died. Let's have a drink."

They drank whiskies, sitting on the bungalow veranda. They saw the red sun die behind the Periamalley Hills. At the sun's red death, the light was cut off sharply. There was no long lingering purple twilight like that of an English June. Darkness invaded hill and valley and the stars were bright above.

Maxwell's servant brought a lamp. Maxwell leaned forward in his chair and his face glowed in the lamplight against the white of his shirt.

"If you find out who sent the petition," he asked, "what will you do?"

Loring told him. His voice was grim. Maxwell sat back and whistled.

"That's the stuff," he said. "You'll pull a bluff? But be careful. If you do it, take a gun. Sounds theatrical, doesn't it? But suppose your bluff fails? What then? And the gun needn't show. Carry it in your pocket. No. Don't laugh. Listen. Remember you're not in Ceylon. You're on Lantern Hill. An' Lantern Hill's had a sweet reputation for fifteen years. Your coolies are a sweet lot. They hammered Henry Jones. An' the man before him they hammered to hell. They hammered him in front of the factory. He was knocked out. A gun would have saved him. He didn't have a gun. He was a bloody fool. As he lay unconscious in front of the factory the coolies almost beat him to death. That's truth, James. So go slow, as I told you once before."

"Thanks. I will. An' now I must get back to Lantern Hill. Cheer-o."

"Night-night. And remember what I said. I wasn't talking tripe. If you want me when the balloon ascends, pass the word. I'd like to come. Two are better than one."

V

Next day Loring showed Veerasamy the petition. Veerasamy studied it with tremendous care. Then he said he knew the writing. He'd seen it before. Couldn't remember where or when. Couldn't remember whose writing it was. If master would leave him the writing, he'd find out. Oah, yes. Trust him. He would be one Sherlock Holmes. He would be one cunning serpent lurking in the grasses.

"Right, Veerasamy," Loring said. "Keep the petition. Remember, not a word to a soul."

"Not a syllable, master. Oah, no. I shall be plumb dumb."

Veerasamy was delighted to share Loring's confidence. Like many people, he regarded himself as a born detective. His first step in solving what he described as "The Lantern Hill Enigma," was to compare the writing in the petition with signatures in the office books of the estate's native staff. He was disappointed. The signatures in no way resembled the writing in the petition. Next day Veerasamy went over to Neville's Cross. He spoke to Maxwell (he considered Loring would not mind this) and Maxwell showed him the signatures of the Neville's Cross native staff. Veerasamy was disappointed again. He felt as he told Maxwell "all blue." However, he realised, when his initial dejection had passed, that he had ascertained something. He had ascertained that the petition was not written by any person on Lantern Hill or Neville's Cross. The coolies, he knew, could not write English. The petition, therefore, had been written by someone outside Neville's Cross or Lantern Hill.

Then where, he asked himself, was the obvious place in which the petition was written by the someone as yet unknown? The answer was obvious. It was Butlagoundu, a village next door to Neville's Cross. The next nearest village was Mandapetty, and that was forty miles away.

For two days Veerasamy continued his investigations. But he again drew blank. For the life of him he could not think of anyone in Butlagoundu who wrote English. It was a small village, peopled with yokels, shopkeepers and a few landlords, who, if they could write at all, wrote strictly in their own language—Tamil. Veerasamy wandered about Butlagoundu seeking sadly what he could find. He found nothing. Then, on the third day, things began to happen.

Veerasamy was most dramatic when he told Loring his adventures. His voice quivered with excitement. His dark eyes blazed.

"Master," he said, "Suddenly I saw a man. I remembered him. I said to myself: 'What is his name? It is Ratinam. He is a failed B.A. He is a truculent loafer. He is a stinking egg. He can write English.' Ratinam does not live in Butlagoundu. He comes to get money from his father to spend in naughty pastimes. He will do anything for money. Except work. He will even write petitions. I remembered he wrote letters for coolies who could not write themselves. I spoke to Ratinam. I employed the pump. I was so wily, so discreet. Oah, yes. As we talked beneath a mango-tree, a Neville's Cross headman came to Ratinam and asked him to write a letter. It was a letter to a planting gentleman. The headman wanted the letter written in English. Ratinam always carries a pen and paper and a little bottle of ink as bazaar writers do. The headman spoke Tamil and Ratinam wrote in English. He made a mistake in his writing. He crumpled the paper. He threw it away. Then he wrote the letter on another piece of paper. He folded the letter and put it in an envelope and gave it to the headman. The headman paid Ratinam and went away.

Then Ratinam went away. Then I picked up the crumpled piece of paper and put it in my pocket. Master, here it is. And here is the petition. Look."

Loring compared the writing in the letters, and it was the same writing. There was no doubt of that. There was no mistaking the *e*'s and the *t*'s and the *g*'s. Loring put the letters in his pocket.

"Veerasamy," he said, "I congratulate you. You are a true-blue detective. You combine the fire and audacity of a Sherlock Holmes with the fine intelligence of a Thorndike or a Trent. You would be a bright jewel in the crown of Scotland Yard. Oah, yes."

Veerasamy beamed. "Thank you, master. You are too decent. You are too damnation nice. I feel like cock on hoop. Can I please help master any more?"

"You can. Let me think. Come back, will you, in half an hour."

"Yes, master."

When Veerasamy returned, Loring had fixed his plan of campaign. "Veerasamy," he said, "Could you get Ratinam to the factory office to-morrow? Tell him I want a clerk for a few days. Say there's a press of work. If he's broke an' wants money, he might contemplate a few days' work. What d'you think?"

"I think he'll come, master. I will lure him. I will tell him all sorts of things. He likes odd jobs. He dislikes permanent labours. What time shall I tell him to come?"

"Half-past ten. You *must* get him, Veerasamy. His presence is essential."

"Very good, master. He shall come. Salaam."

At half-past ten next morning, Loring sat at his desk in his office in the Lantern Hill factory. In the adjoining office, Veerasamy and the assistant clerk did their work. There was a communicating door between the offices. Loring had spoken with Veerasamy early that morning. At ten o'clock Veerasamy had sent the assistant clerk with a letter to Neville's Cross. At half-past ten he knocked on Loring's door.

"Come in," Loring said.

Veerasamy entered. A pock-marked young man entered, also. He was loose-lipped, blear-eyed, flashily dressed.

"Master," Veerasamy said, "Here is an applicant for the temporary clerk's position. His name is Ratinam."

Ratinam salaamed. Veerasamy stood by the door. Loring decided not to waste time.

"Veerasamy," he said, "lock the door."

Veerasamy locked the door. He put the key in his pocket. Ratinam looked at Veerasamy and looked at Loring. His blear eyes widened.

"What is it?" he said to Veerasamy. "What you do? Lemme go."

"Ratinam," Loring said, "you will go when you've answered my questions. Until then you will stay. Come here."

Loring spoke sharply. Ratinam approached Loring's desk. He licked his lips as he approached. Loring took a crumpled letter from his pocket.

"Did you write this, Ratinam?" he asked.

"Yes, master," Ratinam whispered.

"And this?" Loring asked. He showed Ratinam another letter. Ratinam recoiled from the letter.

"No, master, no. Why you want me? I came for job. Lemme go."

"Did you write this letter, Ratinam?"

"No. No. I said so. Can't you hear my voice? It is not my writing."

"We'll see," Loring said. Abruptly he stood up. He opened a drawer in his desk. He took out a whip. Ratinam's face went a dirty gray.

"Did you write this letter, Ratinam?"

"For God's sake, no. I tell you once. Oh, lemme go."

Loring left his desk. He advanced on Ratinam. Ratinam cowered. He backed into a corner. A dribble of saliva ran from his mouth. Loring raised the whip.

"Did you write . . ."

"Yes. Yes." Ratinam yammered. "I tell you everything. All you want to know. I tell you now. Don't hit me. For pity's sake."

"I won't hit you, Ratinam. If you speak the truth."

Yammering, Ratinam spoke. He wrote the petition for Muttuveeran Kangany of Lantern Hill. He wrote it ten days ago. He wrote it because he had no money. Muttuveeran paid him three rupees for his writing.

Loring returned to his desk. Ratinam sobbed in his corner. Veerasamy stood by the door. Muttuveeran Kangany, Loring thought. Not Raman Kangany. Not one of Raman's relations or friends. Muttuveeran had seventy coolies on Lantern Hill. Muttuveeran was heavy game. If he dealt with Muttuveeran he might lose his seventy coolies. Coolies were very difficult to get on Lantern Hill. If Muttuveeran had seven hundred coolies, he would deal with him, the son of a bitch. What was the time? Eleven o'clock. He must get busy.

"Veerasamy."

"Master."

"Call the estate watchman. Akbar Khan, the Punjabi. Yes. Now. One moment. By what time is the tappers' latex weighed? Half-past eleven. Good. Issue orders for every coolie to assemble on the muster ground at half-past eleven. Spread the word by beat of drum. Right. Report here when you've finished."

Veerasamy unlocked the door. He gave Loring the key. Loring relocked the door after Veerasamy. Then he turned to Ratinam.

"You'll stay here," he said. "I want you. No harm will come to you. You must speak the truth. That is all. No, you can't go. Stop that noise."

Loring sat in his office and waited for Akbar Khan. He saw through the office windows the tappers bring their latex to the factory. He heard through the beat of the factory engine the beat of a drum. The steady drum-beats fretted his nerves. He thought of the ordeal that awaited him. He thought of Maxwell's warning. Should he send for Maxwell? There wasn't time. Should he go to his bungalow and get a gun? No. He'd do without a

gun. He wasn't a Dago or a Yank. He'd trust to his hands. Where the hell was Akbar Khan?

There was a knock at the office door. Loring opened the door. Akbar Khan, the watchman, entered the room. He stood to attention and saluted. He had served ten years in the Fourth Punjabis. Loring liked Akbar Khan and he had a great respect for Loring. Akbar Khan had seen Loring deal with Raman Kangany. Loring thought he could trust him the same as he trusted Veerasamy. He hoped so anyway. Akbar Khan was a big strong man.

Loring whispered to him by the office windows. Ratinam tried to listen. Loring told Akbar Khan what he wanted and what he must do. He swore him to secrecy. Akbar Khan saluted and left the office. At twenty minutes past eleven Veerasamy returned to the office. He said the coolies were mustering on the other side of the factory. Loring left Ratinam with Veerasamy. Then Loring waited in Veerasamy's office until Akbar Khan returned. At half-past eleven he returned with Muttuveeran Kangany.

Muttuveeran was a short, stout, middle-aged man. He looked a respectable shopkeeper. He asked Loring what his pleasure might be? Loring told him to wait and see. Muttuveeran waited while Loring went to his office. He returned with a whip and a piece of rope. He gave them to Akbar Kahn. Muttuveeran became nervous when he saw the rope and the whip. He became still more nervous when Veerasamy brought Ratinam into the office. Then Akbar Khan and Veerasamy led Muttuveeran and Ratinam to the muster ground and Loring followed them. On the muster ground three hundred coolies stood facing the factory.

Muttuveeran's wife, a gray-haired woman, stood among the coolies. Loring stood by a tree on the muster ground. Akbar Khan and Muttuveeran and Veerasamy and Ratinam also stood by the tree. The three hundred coolies stopped talking when they saw Loring, and he talked to them standing by the tree.

VI

"The big master in Colombo," Loring said, "has sent me a petition that was sent him from Lantern Hill. I have it in my pocket. I will read you it. Listen."

Loring took the petition from his pocket. He read it in Tamil to the coolies. He read it slowly and carefully so that each coolie could understand the petition. When he had finished his reading, Loring addressed the coolies.

"This petition," Loring said, "is full of lies. There is no truth in it. The man who sent it is a liar, and I am going to deal with that man. I am going to deal with him in front of you. I am going to stop the sending of petitions. Who is the man who sent the petition? I will tell you. It is Muttuveeran Kangany."

"No, master, no," Muttuveeran cried. "I swear I didn't."

Loring ignored Muttuveeran and turned to Ratinam.

"Ratinam," he said, "Did you write the petition that Muttuveeran sent?"

"Yes, master."

"Did Muttuveeran pay you three rupees for writing the petition?"

"Yes, master."

Loring turned to Muttuveeran.

"Did you send the petition," he asked, "to the big master in Colombo?"

"No, master."

"Did you pay Ratinam three rupees for writing the petition?"

"No, master."

"We'll see. Akbar Khan."

"Master."

"Seize him."

Muttuveeran was seized. His hands were pinned behind him. He began to scream and his wife began to scream. She tried to run to Muttuveeran. Veerasamy caught her. He put his hand across her mouth. An uneasy movement stirred the coolies' ranks. The ranks swayed forward as if about to rush. A big black-faced coolie in the front rank flung up a hand. Loring remembered Maxwell's warning. He saw himself being trampled in the dirt. He wished he'd brought that gun. He advanced on the swaying ranks. His eyes were glaring; his fists clenched.

"By God," he said, "I'll thrash the first man who moves."

The coolies looked at Loring's glaring eyes and remembered Raman Kangany. The uneasy movement stilled. The black-faced coolie dropped his hand. Loring spoke. His voice cut like a whip.

"Akbar Khan."

"Master."

"Tie Muttuveeran to the tree."

Muttuveeran was tied, his hands above his head.

"Strip him."

He was stripped.

"Lay on."

Akbar Khan raised his whip. The tied man shivered. Then he began to sweat. Loring also began to sweat as he watched his naked victim and prayed his bluff might win.

Slowly, slowly, the whiphead lifted; it reached the zenith of its rising arc. And now it circled with growing momentum about the watchman's head.

The whiplash tautened; it cut the air. It hissed like a striking snake. A sigh of terror rose from the coolies and terror was stamped on the tied man's face. His mouth half-opened. But he spoke no word. Good God, thought Loring, am I going to lose?"

The watchman gave him a troubled look. It meant the bluff was failing. Still, there was one last card to play.

The watchman played it. He cracked the whip. Suddenly, venomously.

In the sun-struck silence the effect was shattering. The report burst like a pistol report. It finished Muttuveeran. His nerve failed. He screamed and sobbed.

"Master, master."

"Yes."

"I sent the petition to the big master in Colombo."

"Yes."

"I paid Ratinam three rupees for writing the petition."

Loring turned to Akbar Khan.

"Loose him," he said.

Muttuveeran was loosed. He collapsed at the foot of the tree. His wife ran to him. She wiped the sweat from his back. She covered his nakedness. Then she helped him to his feet. Loring addressed him.

"Muttuveeran," he said, "To-day I will settle your account. Tomorrow you and your wife and your family will leave Lantern Hill. Your coolies will stay. If any of your coolies," he turned to the coolies, "tries to leave Lantern Hill, I will deal with him as I meant to deal with you. That is all. The muster is finished."

Loring returned to his office in the factory. He sat down at his desk and lit a cigarette. He noticed his hands were wet and trembling.

VII

That afternoon Loring settled Muttuveeran's account. That night Loring set a watch on Muttuveeran's lines. No coolie tried to leave the lines and next morning Muttuveeran and his wife and his family left Lantern Hill. His coolies remained. There was no more serious coolie trouble during Loring's stay on Lantern Hill.

But, sometimes, he wondered what would have happened that morning in front of the factory if his bluff had failed ?

GREEN RIBBONS

By BARBARA BINGLEY

OVER the fields was a film of grey haze like scum on still water, and the air itself was stiller than the waters of Yuckel Mere. The white horse laid himself down in the meadow under the shadow of the hedge, and Worry, the terrier, tacitly agreeing to a truce with Mrs. Pigeon, stretched himself flat, his belly on the cool slates of the passage way between the larder and the stillroom. Folded between the hills, Spayne's Marvel slept with drawn blinds lidding its mullioned windows. In the long border the lilies wilted, and the paving stones were fiery hot to touch. Nectarines—that pagan fruit—savoured the sun's kiss, and a little grass snake warmed his coils on the top of the south wall, lying between pennywort and toadflax.

In all the sultry valley only Jennifer's garden was cool. It lay in the heart of the shrubbery. To reach it you walked across the lawn, as if to go to the summer house, following a path walled on one side with rhododendrons. Between two bushy clumps was a gap, as if some hidden person had divided the thick curtain of leaves for a moment, and was peering through. If you crept through the gap, pushing a way between the dusty acrid-smelling leaves, you came to a little clearing surrounded on all four sides by evergreens. This was Jennifer's garden. As you stood brushing the cobwebs out of your hair, your eyes were met by the words, "Jennifer Way. Privit." printed in straggling letters on a notice board nailed to a tree stump. The place had been her's since her seventh birthday—that was five years ago—when her grandmother, Lady Basset, had given it to be her very own. Not everyone knew how to appreciate it as she did. The only time stout Mrs. Pigeon pushed her way into the clearing, she declared it a 'mortal drowsy place,' and Laver, the gardener, would say sighingly, as he gave Jennifer the spare seedlings she would come asking for: 'They're cast for death, Miss Jenny same's vargin martyrs. They'll never thrive under laurel; laurel's a step-mother to all growin' things.'

But Jennifer was hopeful, and, perhaps because she was 'green-fingered,' some of her plants struggled out of the earth, though their pale faces did not fulfil the gay promises made by the pictures on the penny seed packets. She loved these sickly flowers of hers, as a mother loves her ailing children, whom she holds far dearer than their lusty playmates. Jennifer scorned the periwinkles that multiplied under the bushes. Their shiny leaves looked no more real, she thought, than those on Mrs. Pigeon's Sunday bonnet. Jennifer's affections could be gauged by the gifts of flowers she made. The pallid primroses were for Grandmama, who loved their perfume as a lingering and ghostly thing, like the memory of an old love. The Rector and Dr. Faucett had posies of tobacco that left on their coats and fingers traces sticky and sweet as children's kisses. The periwinkles

were the portion of great uncle Herbert, who was red-faced and loud of voice. The flowers seemed as little wishful to stay with him as Jennifer herself, and dropped their blue trumpets to ground as soon as they touched his button-hole.

Spayne's Marvel slept. In her four post bed Lady Basset dreamed of her daughter in India ; behind the still-room door the handkerchief rose and fell, where it rested on Mrs. Pigeon's neat snub nose ; and in the kitchen garden Laver, prolonging his bread and cheese, munched and drowsed under the mulberry tree. Only Jennifer was awake, Jennifer and the gnats who danced their secret, tireless saraband under the leaves. She sat on the ground with her back against a tree stump, her legs stretched out in front of her. Her hair slipped over her cheek. She tossed it back, too absorbed in what she was doing to stop and twist it into plaits.

She was reading aloud to herself. To Jennifer, words on a page were like dry sea shells, or pebbles from the beach, whilst to speak them aloud was to dip them again in water, was to set their colours shining, and to burnish anew their thousand iridescent lights. The words she chanted that hot afternoon were more precious to her than words had ever been ; for they were her own.

She had just discovered that a magic lay in her own mind—she could write poetry herself. And she was made aware of the ecstasy that makes every rhymers own brother to the lark, and kin to every running stream.

As she hummed, she wrote on a piece of paper spread on a flat stone. Then she read the lines, her lips shaping the words with infinite delight. They were lovely words. She jumped to her feet ; snatched up sunbonnet, and scrambled through the laurels. This was something too wonderful to keep to herself ; she had to tell someone about it quick. She ran towards the house, keeping to the edge of the lawn so as not to step on the shadow of the cedar tree. Jennifer was afraid of that cedar, especially at night, when his shadow lengthened like a black hand, and touched the house. The french windows of the drawing-room were open, and she ran in, calling : "Grandmama, Grandmama." Then she was silent.

It seemed wrong to shout, and wake all those, fat, sleepy chairs, and the drowsy, drooping candles. She tiptoed past them. Or—she stopped, should she tell them ? No ; they were aloof, indifferent to her excitement. Not one of the familiar things was awake enough to care that she, Jennifer Way, had written poetry of her own.

There was always a stillness about the drawing-room of Spayne's Marvel. It was like the parlour of Sleeping Beauty's palace : nothing had been moved there for a hundred years, and sometimes Jennifer imagined that the trees shading the Rockingham shepherdesses had roots that went deep, deep into the marble of the mantelpiece. Grandmama's couch, with its curled ends and feet like the paws of a golden cat, was empty, and her work had all been folded and put away in the black box with shining pearl pagodas on the lid. She must be resting in her room. There were nineteen shallow steps to the landing. Jennifer climbed them two at a

time, and the last three in one. The door on the left was ajar : she pushed it open, and went inside.

Grandmama was asleep, her little nose hooked into the pillow. Her white hair, moist with the heat, lay streakily close to her head, showing the pink skin between the strands. It looked like Mrs. Pigeon's party pudding. Jennifer came close to the bed, rustling the piece of paper in her hand. People asleep were frightening—they went so far away. Someday she would make a poem out of that. There were poems in everything. The sprigged rosebuds of the chintz, the squares of light lying on the carpet, the wasp beating on the pane—each had its own song, if only she could find the right words for it.

"Grandmama, wake up," she whispered : "wake up and listen."

But Grandmama only stirred a little, and the sound her stirring made said, "Shh . . . shhh." Jennifer hesitated. Perhaps after all Laver would be the best person to tell about her poem. Laver always understood things. He was never surprised when she talked to the flowers. He 'passed the time o' day wi' 'em himself'; and he felt as she did about the cedar tree, calling it a 'Black churchyardy thing.' There was a bond between them. They were kin and kind as the water-sprite and the old triton are, both born of the same element. But with Laver and Jennifer it was the warm earth, and not the running water that was their heritage; and what it gave them they loved with the same passion.

Jennifer went out of doors again through the garden room. It had a friendly smell of damp serge and drying bulbs. Laver would be in the kitchen garden, and as Jennifer ran to find him, her feet kept time to the words that were singing in her head. At the south wall she stopped to give the nearest peach an ecstatic pinch; then, after her usual struggle with the iron latch, she opened the door in the wall: crossed the road to the farm, and went into the kitchen garden. Slamming the gate, she began to call : "Laaver, Laaaver," in a voice as shrill as a jay.

"'Ere oi be," came rumbling back to her from behind a hedge of scarlet runners. She tore up the path : Laver was digging a bed near the mulberry tree, close to the well. Her flying hair, and the waving sheet of paper startled the robin at Laver's feet. He fluttered away indignantly.

"Eh, but you've scared the robin, Miss Jenny."

"Doesn't matter, Laver. Silly little thing. It ought to know me by now. I've got something to show you." She was out of breath with running and excitement.

"Matter it do. It wur my new bird. Kitchen cat 'er caught t'other one. This chap wur growin' justabout friendly, an' now you've frit 'un."

"Listen, Laver, and don't be so grumpy, I've done a surprise, and I'm not going to tell anyone but you." Jennifer swung herself up onto the stone coping of the well, and sat there, her feet swinging amongst the heads of red and white valerian. Laver peered at the paper she flourished at him.

"Is this a surprise? Writin'? Why that's no novelty, I've knowed as you could write this many a day."

"Hurry up, Laver. You are slow, slow as a slow-worm,—and even an ordinary worm's slow enough."

“Never bring the blackthorn in, mortal child,
There is magic in its flowers, dark magic in its stem,
The green-clad Ones will harm you,
If you bring the blackthorn in.

But good fortune shall attend you,
If you leave the blackthorn be."

“ ‘ymns, this ’ere like ’ymns ! Never. This ’ere’s but a sad mumscramble
’o words. The ’ymns they rhymes praaper. ‘ Love an’ above,’ ‘ Son an’
one,’ so as ’ee can guess what’s comin’. This ’ere’s poor stuff, oi reckon.
Where d’you find un ? ”

"I'll thank 'ee not to miscall me, Miss Jenny," said Laver stiffly, "wrote it yerself, did 'ee,—mpfh." He read the verses through slowly a second time.

"Yes, there are." The contradiction was not far removed from tears. "They made rings on High Meadow, and drink out of acorns, and sometimes they's small as small, and sometimes they're bigger'n we are. If you don't believe in them, why won't you pass the Seven Stones by moonlight? . . . Nanny Pigeon told me you wouldn't."

"There's times an' seasons fur believin' things. When you're sittin'

so snug in yer pew, wi' passon amakin' all things plain before 'ee, then tes easy enough to say ghosses and piskies are no more'n Bedlam fancies. But when you've 'ad a pint or two, wi' the chaps at the 'Dragon' all tellin' tales to frit each other, why, then it's no wonder an ignnerant man's mistrustful, an' 'ud rather come home along by the road than th' fields. But that don't consarn 'ee, Miss Jenny. You'm a lady born, an' too old for sich notions."

"I'm not. Besides, you don't understand—people never ought to grow too old for 'notions' if they're lovely ones. . . ."

The old man stared at her small eager face, flushed and defiant. He shook his head; dug his spade into the earth, and then sat beside her on the stone coping of the well. He realised there were depths beyond this 'passel o' nonsense' that required his full attention. He peered at the paper.

"When did 'ee go fur to make this up, Missy?"

"This afternoon. I've been in my garden."

"Best not do it again."

"Why not? I want to. It's lovely. . . ."

"That's fur others to say. Tesn't wholesome. Fairies and sich. Well, well, I allus did say as summat ud come of it."

He brooded for a minute or two, his fingers scrabbling in his sparse grey whiskers, his eyes on the past.

"Tesn't wholesome," he repeated. "Someone should ha' told 'er as things met happen. Town-schooled she was, an' knew no better. Green ribbons." He shook his head. "An' grassy green at that."

Jennifer stopped swinging her feet amongst the valerian, and looked at him with impatient curiosity.

"What are you talking about, Laver? Who wore green ribbons? Why shouldn't they? What's it got to do with me?"

"Didn't yer Granma never tell 'ee? Consarns 'er more nor it do me, seein' as 'ow t'was at yer christenin' it 'appened."

"What happened?" Jenny's eyes were round and bright.

"Well—seein' as 'ow 'er ladyship 'asn't seen fit to tell 'ee, I don't know as I should. . . ."

"You must, Laver. It isn't fair—not now. You know Granma always forgets things."

"Aye, sorrows come 'ard on 'er. She's not bin the same since yer Grandad died. 'E was a praaper gent and no mistake. I mind 'ow he used to go to the meets in 'is cranberry coat. They come 'ere once. Sich a pother as there was. 'Ounds barkin', an' the maids servin' out the sloe gin, an' all the gentry wi' their horses fair muckin' up the drive. . . ."

"Laver, you've told me all that hundreds of times—do go on to the christening. Was my mother there? Did I have a big cake? Did Mrs. Pigeon make it?"

"You did ought to know by now, Missey, as 'ow you can't 'urry me," Laver's blue eyes twinkled, and out of his pocket he drew a knife and began

to cut slips of wood from a long lathe standing against the well-head. His knobby hands worked steadily, and the chips of wood flew out over the valerian, or dropped with tiny splashings down the well. "You was born in this house; on May the fust, Beltane's day. I hadn't thought o' that afore, and if it don't signify, I dunno what do." The jack-knife paused in its work, and Laver edged away from Jenny's paper, as if a spell had been written on it.

"Why? Laver, you *are* queer to-day. You've always remembered my birthday was May-day—why d'you think it's funny now?"

"Never mind. I do. But 'twas an odd chance made yer Mam choose Midsummer's Day fur the christening. Fair stripped the garden was, an' the church a bower. Lilies an' roses—sringa an' laylock, you had un all. Yer Granma and Sir Trevor walked down to St. Bede's an' I follered after wi' the pony-trap so full of flowers you couldn't see the seats. They tied the bunches, laughin' like young ones. It's lucky as 'ow we can't see misforten before us. This second sight they talk of's a poor gift, I reckon."

"What's that, Laver?"

"Seein' what's to come. They two ud not've laughed, if they'd knowed afore a twelvemonth as Sir Trevor 'ud be sod-bedded." Laver paused and sighed. "'Er ladyship's 'ad a mort o' sorrow surely. She niver did like that speckly mare, an' when 'er broke Sir Trevor's neck, I reckon yer Granma'd 'ave killed her willing wi' 'er own 'and.'" There was grief in the old man's voice, and Jenny put out her hand and laid it on his knee.

"Not sad things, please, Laver. Go back to the christening and the green ribbons."

"Aye, 'rememberin' bad harvest won't bring 'ee good years' . . . as they say, an' it's no manner o' good mindin' old troubles—Well . . . christenin' wur at two, an' whiles they 'ad their dinner, they laid you in the drawin' room, all dressed up like a 'bouket' in white frills. Laid you on the sofy, yer Mam did, wi' a pillow to keep you firm. I was outside the window, cuttin' back that blue creeper wi' the outlandish name, as yer Granma sets sich store by. Grows rank, it do. Well, the young lady she says to me, 'You keep an eye on her, Laver, whilst I have lunch. Nanny'll be down in a minute, when she's ironed my dress.' So I chopped an' cut, an' whiles I'd peek through the curtains, an' there you was, lyin' so quiet like a lily bud on a pool. It was dry summer, like this un, an' I thought that furrin creeper'd do well, if I tacked it a bit more to the wall. It kep' fallin' down, untidy-like. So seein' as you were quiet, I thought I'd go quick to the garden room an' get a twist o' twine an' a nail or two. I wurn't gone more'n three minutes, I reckon, when I heered you cry, thin an' shrill, like as if summat 'ad frit you. So I run back, and through the window. You was still there, Lord be thanked, but the pillow 'ad fallen, an'—well, I don't say as I saw anything, but there was a queer feel in the room, as if all the flowers in the vases were a-starin' at summat as I couldn't see. An' then, as I righted you an' picked up the pillow, I saw as 'ow someone 'ad tied green ribbons on your little fistes. I took 'em off quick as

quick, I promise you. Lucky I wur used to tyin' plants ; there aren't many men as would ha' bin so 'andy. Just then the Lunnon nurse came in. 'What are you doin' with the child?' she asks sharp. Then I shows her the green ribbons. 'Mrs. Way put them on,' she said, 'I don't care for colours on a young child myself.' 'There's colours an' colours,' I says, 'an' green's not one to put on a child not yet christened. Midsummer's day at that. Green's the fairy colour.' "

"O Laver," Jenny gasped, "d'you mean *They* might have taken me and left a changeling?"

Laver held up a warning hand. He was not going to have his story spoiled.

"'Superstition!' she sniffs, an' takes you off. But I kep' the ribbons in my pocket, an' yet Mam never noticed, being all in a pothor, what with the passon an' the folk, an' the children throwin' posies. A woman's allus a bit moithered those times, specially when it's 'er first. Of course I don't know . . . not as you might say *know* . . ." Laver pondered—"there might've been nothing in that room, an' then again there might. I can't say. . . ."

Jennifer slipped off the well-head and began to caper.

"Laver, they picked me up! I know they did, and if you hadn't come in that instant minute, they'd have taken me off with them. Oh, they would. Say you know they would."

"Nay, I can't do that, Miss Jenny. There's things no man don't rightly know fur certain; things that's best left alone. Piskies be one o' 'em, an' I reckon this po'try's another."

"Well, I'm not going to leave it alone now, Laver. I'm going to write hundreds and hundreds of poems."

"T'won't do you no manner o' good, Miss Jenny." He took off his battered straw hat, and began to wipe his troubled forehead.

"I don't mind about that. You see, Laver, I feel different now. When you know you can make songs out of them, you look much closer at things. You want to know all about them. It's like finding the 'Rubies, the faery favours,' in the cowslips."

"Diff'rent," Laver interrupted her. "Diff'rent. Aye, that's just it. An' it doesn't do a body any good t'be out o' the ordinary. Makes folks mistrustful o' them. Now when I plants rosy snapdragons all in a bed, am I pleased when one comes up sulphur yaller? No, an' what's more, tes sartin sure all they Rosy Queens is bitter as bitter agin that sulphur yaller. I mind too as there was a white rook onct, a pretty bird, too, wi' 'is wing feathers black-tipped,—but t'other birds they gave un a powerful poor time. Tes the same wi' 'umans: they likes folk to be same as their-selves. A lad'll not choose a maid fur po'try writin'; it'll discourage 'im, more likely."

But Jennifer was only half listening. She held the feathery heads of the valerian alternately under her small nose and murmured meditatively:

"I wonder which the cats like most, the red flowers or the white ones. I think they smell just the same."

' At night when flowers their petals shed,
And sly cats come with shadowy tread
To sniff valerian white and red . . . '

You see, Laver, I'll make rhymes, as you're so set on them."

"Nay, nay. Give over now, Maidie." He took the flowers from her hand, and drew her close to him. "I do want 'ee to give me your solemn promise not to write any more o' these." His earthy finger tapped significantly on the paper beside him, but Jennifer shook her brown head.

"It's no good, Laver. You can't help writing songs, if you've been chosen to write them. You can't be just the same as other people, if *They*'ve laid their touch on you—can you?"

"I dunno. I wish I 'adn't told you now. I niver thought as 'ow you'd take it like this. So light'earted. 'Sides," he added unconvincingly, "'Er ladyship ud tell you as 'ow t'was all fancy. May be she's right, I ain't niver *said* as I believed on 'em."

"But you *do*, you *do*," Jenny mocked, "or you'd have left those green ribbons on me, and you don't like me writing poetry 'cos you think the faeries'll put ideas in my head, and then I might be pixie-led."

This was so near the truth, that Laver could find no answer to it. He stared at Jennifer in troubled silence, whilst she gathered up her poem and wands of valerian.

"'Twon't bring you good fortune, Miss Jenny, mark my words."

"Well, Laver darling, you shouldn't have left me to fetch those nails. But I'm glad you did."

As she spun round, the plume of white flowers brushed his chin, quick and soft like a child's kiss. He watched her ruefully, as she ran down the path, gay as a blown leaf, singing shrilly:

"Jennifer Way was near stolen away,
Grassy green ribbons on Midsummer day . . ."

When she had gone, and warm silence crept back over the garden, a kind of reluctant pride overspread Laver's face, as he pulled his spade out of the sun-baked earth.

"'Day an' away,' she've got un rhymin' praaper now. . . . But I don't 'old wi' it. Come cold winds, an' they rare early flowers is nipped cruel. 'T'es the common 'ardy ones as enjoys the sun longest . . ."

A CRITICAL STROLL THROUGH BERNARD SHAW

By OSBERT BURDETT

THE word shaw means a thicket : no bad description of G.B.S., whose style is, essentially, staccato.

Mr. Shaw having just followed his reputation round the world, having flown successfully over the Great Wall of China, having at last indulged his American admirers with a speech in New York, the Editor has decided this to be the moment for a critical survey in *THE LONDON MERCURY*. The task has been allotted to the most compliant of his contributors, for who else would re-discuss the most familiar of living writers ? Bernard Shaw has become an institution as much taken for granted as Sydney Smith was : nearly his namesake, also a famous pamphleteer. The fascinated, however, have not been poets or literary critics, or simple folk, but the more serious sort of general readers, those less interested in the arts than in public questions. This, then, is the first time for years, reviews excepted, that the Shavian corpus has been discussed here.

Contemporarily successful writers reflect the spirit of their time, and Bernard Shaw's popularity is appropriate to an age of newspapers. In Fleet Street his opinions are always considered to be "news," even though often suppressed there. The chief of living journalists has made his reputation by annexing the theatre to propaganda and debate ; but he has not won the poets, nor critics able to distinguish between journalism and literature, a point-of-view and a person, an argument and a drama, an effective staccato and a rhythm of life. Moreover, people who can make these distinctions, yet who can enjoy one form of entertainment without confusing it with another, feel ungrateful when, confronted with so much fun, generosity and good temper, criticism forces them to insist that the best journalism is to literature what the best applied art is to fine ; and that, among the hundred topics on which Mr. Shaw's work invites discussion, literature and drama are small talk. His and Blake's are opposite extremes, which by contrast reveal the limitation of each other. A brilliant surface is not beauty. Cerebration is not depth ; and the Rodin bust shows a high impressive mask—to a head that has no back to it.

The style is as effective, and unquiet, as that of Macaulay, another brilliant journalist, who appropriated History to propaganda very much as Mr. Shaw has appropriated pen, platform, and stage. Both are efficient, plausible, and successful in the highest degree ; both are personalities ; and both have won unbounded admiration from philistines. The bulk of Bernard Shaw's followers consist of earnest folk, often women, who, accepting his leadership (or enjoying his fun) on one or more of his current topics, confuse their pleasure and his personal popularity

with the pleasure of art and the reputation of a great author. Our incapacity for art and our appetite for journalism, like a taste for tonics and indifference to wine, explain the nature, and the extent, of this success. Why, then, do the critics enjoy him? The young Shaw who reproached himself for indulging in light opera when he knew that Bach would have been better for his soul is the counter-part of the critic who cannot resist a Shavian book when the Muses should be beckoning him.

Thus, the novels and the plays are less interesting for their narrative or drama than for the unexpected shapes into which journalism has twisted them. The formula of both stories and plays derives from the Socratic dialogue, and the type of the novels was anticipated a century ago by Thomas Love Peacock, whose *Headlong Hall* and other conversational novels are very similar to the early fiction of the author of *Heartbreak House*. Had Peacock been living at present, he would have found in places like the Fabian Summer School the setting for his satirical discussions, and instead of Mr. Foster (the perfectibilian) and of Mr. Escot (the deteriorationist), Miss Socialist, Mr. Artandcraft, and Professor Psychoanalyst would have been his types. The heroine of *Melincourt*, one of Peacock's good women, is curiously like Lydia in *Cashel Byron's Profession*. With a mind of her own, practical capacity, independence, generosity and candour, she almost survives, like Lydia, her stilted speech. In true Shavian fashion, Anthelia Melincourt sketches her requirements in love with the ardour and forensic eloquence of a practised public speaker. As a human being she is absurd, but the mechanical formula of such a character has its own amusement. This is also Bernard Shaw's funny limitation. Like a chemist who has discovered the formula of alcohol, and has then found this formula in wine, he declares that alcohol and wine are identical! The mechanism of verse is equally far from poetry, though their formula is the same: the whole difference residing, both in poetry and in wine, in a change that eludes analysis because the mystery of creation has taken place. In fact, the deluded who confuse wine and beer with "alcohol" are the counterpart among diners of the readers who call the Shavian fireworks works of art. In one respect the argumentative Peacock was more original than his successor, for Peacock invented successfully a silent character, Sir Oran Haut-ton; and the story of *Melincourt* is never more interesting than when this dumb ape is present. When Mr. Shaw put a microbe on the stage, he made the creature talk, whereas Peacock's speechless orang-outang disproves the Shavian contention that only by being self-explanatory *in words* can characters reveal themselves. Ballet, too, is drama, without words—but without loss. Again, in the seventies, W. H. Mallock wrote a conversational novel, *The New Republic*, which virtually was a Socratic debate; but the form is rare, not only because good debaters are few but because novel-readers want less abstraction, more narrative, and above all more humanity—for which last sentiment and sex are the popular, maudlin recipes. So for the pedigree!

Yet, it is not for want of narrative skill that the Shavian novels are callow.

The description of the fight in *Cashel Byron* is enough to prove that ; but already we have the tendency to substitute points-of-view for people, abstract argument for conflicting feelings. *Cashel Byron*, having the most narrative, is the best of this batch ; *An Unsocial Socialist* is the richest in farce, and declamation ; *Love Among the Artists* hovers between narrative and debate ; *The Irrational Knot* is drab and ugly ; and *Immaturity* I found unreadable. The only work of its author that I have been unable to finish, it would have been inexcusable to print it thus late except as a pretext for the autobiographical preface. The trouble with the characters in these early novels was their caddishness, which has seldom been entirely outgrown in the plays ; and the texture was so crude, the style so harsh, that even the lively passages glare like electric bulbs in the drab room of a lodging-house in Bayswater. Mr. Shaw's weakness for abstraction and ideas (so valuable for journalism and controversy) prevented him from fattening the narrative thread in *Cashel Byron*, and made him instead, the begetter of a tribe of opinionated creatures in the manner of Smilash, the unsocial precursor of John Tanner, Dubedat, and the rest.

The same process can be observed in the plays, with almost mechanical repetition. Their novelty lay in the social or abstract analysis introduced ; Mr. Shaw does know his economics ; in the unfamiliar expository gifts of the chief speakers, and in transferring the pleasures sometimes found at exciting public meetings to the theatre, where the humorous set speech and the ardent discussion were rendered with professional skill and therefore not bungled (as in real life) by nervous or clumsy debaters. When our newspapers engineer a general discussion, they call it (inaccurately) a symposium. When Bernard Shaw arranges a public meeting in all its details and supplies all the speeches and rejoinders himself, he calls it a play—or did until A. B. Walkley led him, for a time, to more accurate terms, discussion or debate. The relief consists in bouts of farce, which make the lulls in the discussion, and are called by the indulgent author the art of anticlimax ! The laughter aroused by the plays conferred a reputation for wit that may puzzle posterity : not because humour—or wit of one kind—was wanting, but because the kind of wit is rarely verbal. It normally produces surprise by a criterion which, once this ceases to be novel, ceases to amuse. For example, there used to be a loud laugh at this exchange : “ Mendoza : I am a brigand : I live by robbing the rich. Tanner : I am a gentleman : I live by robbing the poor.” The matter was most funny when the matter was new. It is less funny when the matter has grown familiar. This is not exactly wit ; it is humour ; for in true wit, the smallest of literary morsels, the manner is artistically much, the matter little. Wilde's wit endures because he found a superlative phrasing for trifles. The art lay more in the expression than in the thought. Mr. Shaw will have it that the matter counts most, for by magnifying a flaw you can disguise it from the undiscerning. He is a bad subject for literary criticism because his manner is unimaginative, a good subject for opinion-baiting because he is full of ideas. Yet, the art of

literature is the art of expression simply. Herrick, who had nothing to say, is an exquisite poet; Tupper, full of matter, hopeless; and when Shelley found the words "slow" and "soft" for a toad, his poetic gift shone in one of its perfections. This disparity of manner to matter is the reason why we seldom return to Mr. Shaw's work. Once mental curiosity has been satisfied, there is, a few passages excepted, little to retain us.

The plays that act best are those in which the discussion is most widely distributed—from the *Pleasant and Unpleasant* to the *Three Plays for Puritans* and *Fanny*—and most interwoven with narrative. In *Misalliance* and *Getting Married* there was no narrative; the unbroken debate remained static, and half the audience was bored. Later, the long speech, culminating in the Inquisitor's in *Saint Joan* and the King's in *The Apple Cart*, was the great attraction; but the chief development has been in the distribution of the discussion, the evident desire to escape from narrative, (hence the "frost" of *Too True To Be Good*), and the more or less reliance on farce.

Of the middle and later plays, *Fanny's First Play* had the liveliest movement and the best "curtains"; the amphitheatre scenes in *Androcles* were farcical to admiration; the trial scene in *Saint Joan* had the success of all good stage-trials; but no play (however full of meaning) except *Fanny's* was free from ineptitudes. The few failures are equally clear: *Overruled*, his worst play; the bad opening scene to *Androcles*; scene one of *Saint Joan*; the first ten minutes of *The Apple Cart*; the complete unreality of its Interlude; the first play in the *Methuselah* cycle; the very poor Playlets of the War. Conversely, the first act of *The Philanderer*; *Mrs. Warren's Profession*; *John Bull's Other Island*, with at last a landscape and a countryside, and with Peter Keegan—its author's best attempt at a poet; a curiously moving quality in *Heartbreak House*, where (as, again, in the fifth section of *Methuselah*) a sort of mental dizziness is communicated to the audience as of Thought itself eddying on the brink of a breakdown: these are the best that Bernard Shaw has given us in the theatre.

The prose of the prefaces and of the separate essays shows one delusion, curious in this author. The effectiveness of a steam-engine cannot be denied to this prose, but does the claim that this English is the "English of Swift" convince us? The absence of idiom from the style of Bernard Shaw is as striking as the presence of parlance. Certainly, he reflects current urban speech; but in an age of newspapers—making deaf the people whose eyes devour twice a day sentences never tested by the ear—most townsmen do not use idiom. They have lost it. Urban speech is now the slop left from the printed word; and idiom exists nowhere but in dead classics, on the lips of living poets, and in remote villages. Townsmen now gabble the vacant phrases which they have read in newspapers. For a student of idiom, a man with two ears, to listen to the talk around him is an odd experience. The other day, for one instance, I overheard a lady of high pretension defending herself from some charge of neglect by the remark: "I assure you I have explored every avenue." One might have been listening to Mr. Lloyd George, or to someone reading from

a leading article. For all its vigour, humour, incisiveness, Mr. Shaw's prose is full of such things : from " to effect an entrance " to others that one has not the heart to verify. His style has the clatter of a train ; and " if you have ears prepare to stuff them now " is the cry of our nerves when a new piece is offered to our curiosity, otherwise alert enough perhaps.

His prose is read for its information, its humour, its combativeness : three things that have no necessary connection with literature ; from which, in truth, literature is free in proportion to its vintage quality. The three, however, are the mainsprings of journalism, and a great journalist may not be a great author. Thus his own criticism works best with ideas ; is uneasy when he writes of a poet like Keats ; is most curious when drawn by a rare artist like Poe : an artist, however, who happened to combine an inquisitive intelligence with an unearthly imagination.

The bulk of his information is compressed in *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism*. This is probably the fullest, readable description in one volume of our Industrial society. It should be read by all who care to understand the world in which they have to make a living. It is interesting less for the theory of equal incomes that it expounds than for telling people those facts never taught at school, facts of which, as a rule, they will learn no more than their own subsequent work may thrust upon them. The money market is a puzzle to most people who are not stock-brokers ; municipal trading to commercial men, and to the professions. If this information is desirable for the average citizen, he will find it simplified here. Yet poets, fine prosemen, and those for whom they write need but little of it, and are better without much of it. The incuriosity, even of the majority, about the machinery of society may, moreover, be due as much to a wise instinct as to ineptitude. In truth, simple souls can comfort their ignorance with the joyful confession of Thomas à Kempis : " The Holy Spirit has liberated me from a multitude of opinions." Many of us, indeed, hate Industrialism so profoundly that we have small desire to understand it in detail ; and, if questioned, would reply cheerfully that we do not believe Industrialism can be re-arranged by Communism, or by any other mechanical method, to our liking ; we think it the product of a false philosophy and a vile religion which will change when enough men cease to have faith in it ; and that civilization can be recovered only by another religion : the old religion that we believe to be true. We do not want it tidied. We want it transformed. We dread reforms, for reforms would keep the present system (and its philosophy) intact. Anyway, it is characteristic that Mr. Shaw's advocacy of equal incomes for everyone is the logic of our stratified distribution pushed to its extreme ; that his proposed method of distribution is not human, but mechanical. Like a train on the metals, his argument pursues its " glittering logical road." Though he denies the term, his arguments (elsewhere and here) often turn out to be a Materialist's.

His tactics in debate were seen typically in *Commonsense about the War*. There he carried to another extreme his little way of finding unpopular

reasons for popular causes, thus gaining the credit (and discredit) of being safe and revolutionary at the same time. He is happiest on hard facts : money, organization, or abstract ideas. The tender, the delicate, the tragic, the holy freeze at his touch.

If a man remains professional in letters to the dearest of his women-friends, supposing his sincerity to be unquestioned and his heart to be warm, then his powers of expressing emotion and conveying it (the artist's powers) must be frozen. Yet the private *Correspondence* with Ellen Terry was indistinguishable in tone from the *Saturday* reviews, written simultaneously. He flirted with his public in the same key as he flirted with her ; only, "flirting with the public" is not real flirting, but its mimicry. In his own words, when he knew women well enough to fall in love with them, none of these ardent "affairs" ever made him late for a committee-meeting : good evidence that he has not been in love, except of course with public business and committees. The assignation that G.B.S. preferred is decisive. What artist has loved so ? Where his committee was there must his heart have been also.

It is appropriate that such a frigid author (not man) should have tried to invent a new religion out of science : science, which (when it is not guesswork) is tied to material things or abstract theories, and is as impotent to tell us anything about religion as it is to explain art, or love, or consciousness even. The theory of evolution is no nearer proof than before ; but, if it should survive, will still be limited to a theory of mediate creation. All experience, reason, imagination forbids us to believe that the less can be the cause of the greater ; that intelligence can be the creation of a Force, personality the creature of an Impersonal. Not as a constructor, but as a critic of the more absurd pretensions of credulous scientists has Bernard Shaw been a pillar of sanity. A comment that should be missed by no reader of *The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God*, is *The Adventures of the White Girl in Her Search for God** by Charles Herbert Maxwell.

His *Pen-Portraits*, with the quality of drypoints and a touch of genial caricature, are a worthy collection to add to the vivid thumbnail sketches that abound elsewhere in his works. The reader will notice a generosity in the choice of subjects. Except for an obituary or two, written for great occasions, these portraits exclude famous people ; probably because Bernard Shaw preferred to describe those men whose memory might be cherished the better for his draughtsmanship. Some were tried friends, like William Archer, or virtual colleagues like the bearded Hyndman. One, on Henry Arthur Jones, the author of admirable comedies (*The Liars* was one of my mother's two favourite modern plays), shows how imperturbably G.B.S. can sit under the provocations of a gray senior over-excited by the War. The humour is never more genial than when the humorist is under fire, or when moved to a personal recollection of the

*Lutterworth Press. 1s.

salt of the earth : some honest, under-recognised worker. Here the character of this author counts even more with the reader than his skill. We ascribe to the work some of the virtues of its fine workman. To great men he has known, to Rodin and to William Morris, he is humble. The frost a little yields. But what is the difference between them and him ? W. B. Yeats has offered an explanation why Bernard Shaw seems an apparition compared with whole humanity, such as theirs.

In *The Trembling of the Veil*, the poet, meditating on the superficiality of modern men, has written :

Somewhere about 1450 . . . men attained to personality in great numbers, "Unity of Being," and became like a "perfectly proportioned human body," and as men so fashioned held places of power, their nations had it too, prince and ploughman sharing that thought and feeling . . . Then the scattering came . . . Nothing is studied in itself, the mind is a dark well, no surface, depth only . . . In a portrait of some Venetian gentleman by Stozzi. . . whatever thought broods in the dark eyes . . . has drawn its life from his whole body.

Mr. Sargent's painting of President Wilson . . . lives only in the eyes . . . There all was an energy flowing outward from the nature itself ; here all is anxious study and slight deflection of external force . . .

Henceforth no mind like "a perfectly proportioned human body" shall sway the public, for great men must live in a portion of themselves, become professional and abstract ; but . . . they may subdue and conquer, cherish even some Utopian dream, spread abstraction ever further till thought is but a film, and there is no dark depth any more, surface only . . .

Shaw, as I understand him, has no true quarrel with his time, its moon and his almost exactly coincide. . . and in him one discovers, in his writing and his public speech . . . the civilization that Sargent's picture has explored.*

Does not the poet go to the heart of this matter ? Shaw's writings are the brilliant mirror of a shallow time, a time dominated through fatigue by the falsehood of a monist materialism. G.B.S. is a breath among the bones. Magnificent as his journalism is, the want of beauty and depth that it shares with Macaulay's shut it out from the "real estate" of art : from access to that level in the soul where not knowledge but simplicity is wisdom ; where mind is not busy with facts and argument, nor has ceased to be broody, because thought has not crowded apart into the anxious little brain, but flows through all the members. The body is wholesome and the brain quiet in William Morris and in Rodin, men without cerebration, who thought equally with their fingers, were not abstract in their minds, and whose bodies lived in active trance since, unlike masters of journalism, they had not lost, from every organ except the brain, the vision of the Real, their hold on the mystery of life.

Were journalism, applied not fine literature, our subject here however, it would be a critical pleasure to praise the variety of forms, the wonderful skill, which G.B.S. has imported into the fresh, and hitherto sacred, fields that his journalistic genius has boldly invaded.

**Autobiographies*. By W. B. Yeats. pp. 359-363. Macmillan. 1916.

THE LANDLADY*

By PHILIP GOSSE

JUST as the relieving battalion reached the communication trench which leads to Givenchy it began to rain in real earnest. What with the dark and the slippery, deep mud the going was bad, but there was the consolation that there is nothing like steady rain to damp the ardour of the fighting man. A clear moonlight night may be all very well for lover's walks but for a battalion going into or coming out of front-line trenches, a good downpour has its points, for it keeps the keenest-eyed sniper or the boldest patrol harmlessly under cover.

After much stumbling and whispering, for the two front lines were less than fifty yards apart, I found the dug-out which was to be my house and home for the next ten days. We were late getting in, and the medical officer of the 'out-going battalion was impatiently awaiting my arrival. Five minutes was enough for him to explain the lie of the land, the position of the aid posts and where the stretcher-bearers had their quarters.

As he was about to climb up the steep steps leading out of the dug-out he stopped to acquaint me of one other, but very important matter he had forgotten, relating to the Landlady. This was something quite unexpected and I was eager to learn more. Of course I had heard many of the rumours about the Germans keeping women in their officer's dug-outs, but never before had I heard of a woman in the British trenches.

Once, when the division I was with had captured Contalmaison, our ambulance was ordered to make its head-quarters under a heap of broken rubble and bricks which had once been the chateau. Marvellous and elaborate dug-outs these were, far better than any we ever had to show. You went down flights of steps, deeper and deeper, with rooms, some quite large, dug out of the solid earth. At the lowest level of all, far from all sound of gun or shell fire, was a small room in the walls of which were mock port-holes, with mirrors in place of glass, and in other ways made to look like the cabin of a ship. There was also an elaborate full-sized cheval glass ; probably filched from the chateau which once stood many feet above.

These dug-outs, when we first occupied them, were in a state of great disorder, with every evidence of the hurried departure of the previous tenants. All sorts of things were found when the place was cleaned up. In the cabin were many objects which pointed to a woman having occupied it, such as hair-pins, face powder, a pair of silk stockings and one garter. But to return to the Landlady of Givenchy.

It seemed that ever since the British took over their line of trenches from the French, the medical officer of each regiment had instructed the medical officer of the next to be careful to look after the Landlady, who

*From *The Memoirs of a Camp-Follower*, to be published shortly.—Ed.

proved to be a cat, and was the one and only remaining civilian of Givenchy. The regimental doctor produced a tin of preserved milk and gave me precise instructions as to its proper dilution and the hours of the daily feeds just as in peace time he must have done to many a mother over her first baby's bottle. He explained that the Landlady was out, that she went out at dusk every evening but would return at dawn and expect to find her saucer of milk ready prepared, and in its usual place. As to her other rations, it seemed she supplied herself with these by catching rats and field mice every night. These duties I gladly promised to do and we said goodbye.

Tired and wet after the long march I was glad to get out of my damp clothes and curl up in the less damp blankets on the low bunk, which had been made by cutting away the chalk on one side of the dug-out. I soon fell asleep and must have been so for some hours, when something heavy fell on me which woke me up with a start. At first I thought a shell had struck the roof and that I was buried in debris. Then I became aware that the weight on my legs was moving as though alive and I lay quite still afraid to stir. What ever could it be? I dared not put down my hand to feel for fear it was a rat, but if it was it must have been one of those huge monsters an Irish soldier had told me of "as big as a dog."

In the meanwhile the movements of the heavy object had become rhythmical, a sort of prodding was going on, accompanied by an odd deep throbbing sound. Then all of a sudden, as sleep cleared away, it dawned on me that my waker could be no other than my landlady; and gingerly I reached in the direction of the object and felt the soft fur of a cat, busy at that exercise all cats enjoy, of kneading with alternate paws. She soon settled down in the middle of the bunk, and I made myself as comfortable as I could at one edge. After an hour of fitful slumber my batman brought in my breakfast; the Landlady having had hers earlier, continued to sleep on my blankets the remainder of the day. It was not until now that I got my first sight of my Landlady, and a beauty she proved to be. But surely no cat of France?

At the risk of being branded narrow-minded or insular, I must register a word of disparagement of all foreign cats. I do this in no amateurish spirit, but as a professed lover of cats. In many parts of the world I have made it a point to talk to all children and to make endearing sounds to all cats. The English cat is, as a rule, a noble beast; proud and independent, it has preserved its dignity and not bartered its soul to become the fawning slave of man, as has the dog. But your foreign cat is apt to be an ignoble skulker, a flier before strangers, the very dregs of cat society.

Whatever land gave birth to the Landlady, she was certainly as fine a figure of cathood as you could hope to see, even in England itself, that home of fair and gallant cats. Her coat, like that of Joseph, was of many colours, in fact she was a tortoiseshell. She made no claim to Persian pedigree, her hair was short, but thick, soft and scrupulously clean.

During the whole day she slept curled up on my bunk, and did not wake up until the evening. Then, a little while before sunset she arose,

tripped up the steps of the dug-out and inspected the skies. From where she sat she had a good view of Notre Dame de Lorette, behind our lines, and of the broken spire of the church of Ablain St. Nazaire, beyond the crumbled village of Suchez. After a while she sauntered up the trench which led towards the front line, and at a respectful distance I followed her. Presently she reached the fire trench and without warning leaped upon the parapet ; where she sat gazing across No-man's-land, with all the tranquillity of a peacetime cat seated on the wall of its own back yard. No doubt from her point of vantage she could see the ruined mine shafts of Lens and even German soldiers moving about in their trenches. But I trembled for her.

Only some fifty yards separated our front line from that of the enemy. At that very moment more than one German sniper must be watching her ; perhaps was then drawing a bead on her with his rifle. Down many a periscope her image was being thrown by artfully adjusted mirrors into the retinæ of bloodthirsty Boches. Each second I expected to hear the crack of a rifle and to see my Landlady leap into the air and then fall dead or mortally wounded into the bottom of the trench. But nothing of the sort happened, and I was led to suppose that all Germans were not as black as they were painted.

To add to her foolhardiness, the Landlady commenced her evening toilet. In full view of two vast contending armies, each armed to the teeth with every device invented by civilized man to destroy life and limb, she began by washing her face, licking each paw in turn and rubbing her face, neck and ears. Then the sides of her body were dealt with, and then her tail, held down by one paw, was licked from tip to stump. Nothing was left undone, not even the final scrupulous ritual in which one hind leg is thrust stiffly heavenward while the particular region is dealt with.

When all this was completed to her satisfaction, the Landlady settled down to enjoy the view, a view which not one in all the thousands of brave fighting men within a square mile of her dared to look at. It was strange, I thought, that the Landlady could sit up there for twenty minutes in perfect safety, while if I, a non-combatant, whose profession was to succour the sick and wounded, whether friend or foe, showed my head for but one moment above the same trench, I would receive a bullet through my brain. How incalculable are the ways of man !

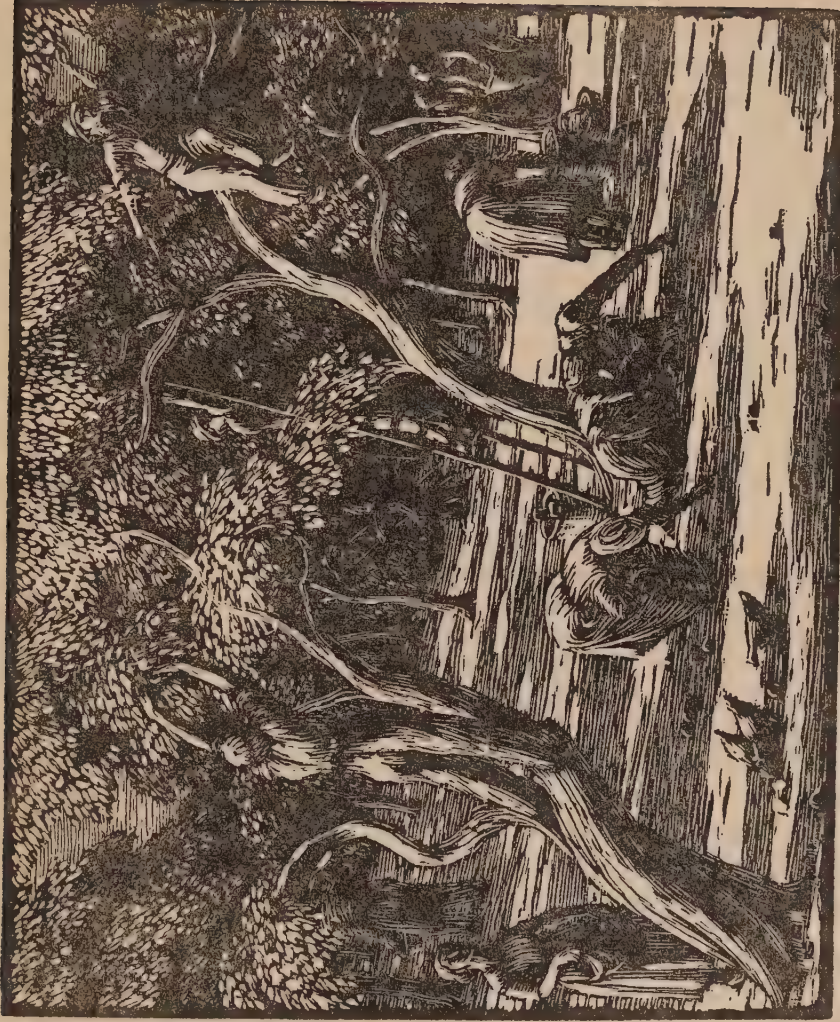
The Landlady, unperplexed by such reflexions, having rested after her ablution, rose, stretched herself and then disappeared over the parapet into No-man's-land . . . and not a sound, not a shot. What she did there until she came back to bed with me some eight hours later no one knows.

Probably she hunted rats and mice in the long grass that grew so rankly amongst the coils of barbed wire out there. Those small mammals were her sport and her supper. But who can say if she had not friends in the German lines ? Who knows but what she was a spy in German pay ? But no, it would be treachery even to think such a thing. Did she, I used to wonder, leap up on the German parapet and make herself at home in

the enemies' line as in ours ? That I can well believe, but what happened beyond our front line she kept to herself, a profound secret.

However, in whatever way she may have spent her nights, to me, or to her dug-out, the Landlady never failed to return at dawn. Each morning it was the same ; after drinking the milk I provided for her, she would leap on to the couch, drive me to one side, settle down where I had been, and fall into peaceful happy slumber.

When the time came for us to leave those trenches, I said goodbye to the Landlady with real regret, and was punctilious about informing the relieving medical officer of her exact requirements and habits.



APPLE-PICKERS
Woodcut by G. RAVERAT

CHANGING LONDON

By A. G. MACDONELL

MESSRS. PINCHIN JOHNSON & CO., LTD., the eminent paint manufacturers of Number 4, Carlton Gardens, London, S.W.1, have just issued a booklet containing the first three of a series of twelve drawings by W. James, of "buildings recently erected or in the course of erection in London." The first three are the New Bank of England, Broadcasting House in Portland Place, and the Masonic Memorial Hall in Great Queen Street. (Incidentally, it redounds greatly to the altruistic reputation of this great firm of paint makers that they should choose for their advertisement buildings in Portland Stone which do not require paint. But that, of course, is also true of their new stone offices in the wilderness of stucco in the Carlton House area, where Sir Reginald Blomfield's lofty pile is now fulfilling the three demands that Messrs. Pinchin Johnson make on their own Finishes; to protect, to preserve, to beautify).

London is changing. Of that there is no shadow of doubt. On every side vast stone blocks of offices are springing up, especially since the breakdown of international trade has made it quite impossible for half of the new offices to be used. It is one of the differences between the French and the English that the former use times of prosperity to beautify their capital, the latter use times of slump. In classical days, it was the overseas empire of Athens that made it possible for Pheidias to build the Parthenon, and for Pericles to make Athens into a city of marble. The splendours of Rome were built by the emperors and not by the toiling republicans, whose hands were busy defending the Republic. It has been left for London to demonstrate that a new city can be built upon the foundations of an Utter Lack of Commerce. The moment the lease of a really attractive site falls vacant, there is a rush to tear down the existing building and to put up a beautiful monster, from the top of which on a clear day the sleepy caretaker and the nesting larks and woodpeckers are able to see the grandstand at Epsom, and the haymakers in the fields of Hertfordshire. Consider, for example, the Adelphi. There is the last corner of the quiet backwater of the Brothers Adam. A handful of yards from the bustling, beastly Strand, the harassed Londoner may lean his arms on the railing and look down at the barges and the tugs of London's river. Away to the west the National Liberal Club is silhouetted against the sky, grey and forbidding and towering, with its thousand chimneys looking like the battlements, if there is a mist, on Richard's Château-Gaillard, or the Chateau-Fort of Bouillon which Godfrey left to go to Jerusalem. To the south-east is Cleopatra's Needle, on which, as it lay on the ground before the workmen

hoisted it into place, the immortal poet Anon. chalked one of his inspired verses :

This 'ere Needle as some supposes,
Was looked upon by the Prophet Moses.
It was taken by the Greeks, and then by the Turks,
And is now set up by the Board of Works.

By a curious and awkward chance, beside the Needle and yet beyond it, there is a tower on the south side which, again if there is a mist, looks so like the Needle that the harassed Londoner may well rub his eyes and conclude that he is worse than he thought he was, and he will rub his eyes still harder when he sees that one of the Needles is smoking and the other is not. Below him, as he leans on the railings, are the Victoria Embankment Gardens, at this time of year a mass of flowers, and beyond that the Embankment itself on which the tramcars swirl past like racing ladybirds, and Green Line Buses like swift mysterious scarabs come to salute the Needle, and slow, clanking lorries, and huge orange oil-tankers. And Charing Cross Bridge strides across the river like a stiff, elongated robot.

This last loop-hole is to be blocked up if the new Adelphi Terrace Bill passes into law. For it will block up the Terrace where Garrick and Boswell and Barrie and Shaw have lived, it will tear down the houses in Adam Street, Robert Street, and John Street, it will destroy the famous arches, and it will build a mighty block of offices on the ground below the Terrace to reach up into the sky far enough to block up the last loop-hole.

Within the last few weeks an attempt was made to do so, and more also, to the quiet row of eighteenth century buildings in Abingdon Street that face the Victoria Tower Gardens, where Rodin's Burghers of Calais is more magnificently ignored than any other of London's works of art. Abingdon Street was to come down and be replaced with eighty-foot high blocks, offices of course, behind which the inquisitive and pertinacious tourist from Arizona and Nebraska would ultimately discover the nestling Abbey-church of Westminster. Coupled with this scheme was a sister, which would 'develop' Parliament Square so that the Architectural effect of the Houses of Parliament would impinge as little upon the lives of the man-in-the-street as their Legislative effect, but the London County Council stepped in and trampled heavily and unchivalrously upon the embryonic sisters.

It is too late, and too melancholy, to talk of Regent Street, where Nash's curve was clipped and whittled and mangled, and, in the effective language of the north, "fair mucked about", by successive Commissioners of Crown Lands until now every known style of architecture, except the wigwam of the North American Indian, is represented in that somewhat majestic thoroughfare. It is a miserable story and, I think, could only have taken place just at the period at which it did take place, when London and the world was gasping for breath after the War, and so

much had been destroyed that one street more or less made very little difference. Probably the general impression in 1919 and 1920 was that Regent Street had suffered more in air-raids than the general public had been told, but then, of course, the censorship was very strict, and quite right too. Anyway, it happened. Alone of the citizenry, the Commissioners of Crown Lands were not dazed by the events of nearly five years ; they kept their heads and, with vastly greater accuracy than, but on the same principles as, the raiding Zeppelins, shot the old street down in a twinkling.

Changing London. Yes, of course it is changing. Of course it must change. To stand still is to become ultimately a desolate stagnant place like Isaiah's city where " the thorns and the briers shall come up, yea upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city, because the palaces shall be forsaken, the multitude of the city shall be left, the forts and the towers shall be dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks."

But the crux of the matter is, what sort of changes shall there be ? There are two sorts, one championed by the Forces of Light and it is called nowadays Town Planning ; the other is the present pestilential piece-meal method and it is called by the hardest possible names that a printer can be persuaded to print.

Let us see how the two sorts have fared, side by side, contending with each other. London has had few town-planners. Wren was the greatest, and he made a great plan for rebuilding London. But he was not allowed to carry it out, and Piece-meal scored its earliest and its most glorious victory over Planning. Wren was, however, allowed to build his cathedral of St. Paul, and to set down his churches all round it, not haphazard, but according to a plan in his mind. For more than two hundred years those churches were left unassailed, but a few years ago, the Piece-Meal champions suddenly noticed that here was a Plan which could do with a bit of destroying. So the Bishop of London started a scheme to pull down the churches and sell the site for buildings that would be really useful, insurances offices, for example, that might resemble the St. Pancras Hotel, or banks, perhaps on the design of the West African Pavilion at Wembley, or bungalows, symbol of the land where Warren Hastings fought and Ranjitsinjhi was born. But a certain poet killed the scheme stone-dead with a single verse :

But our Mother the Church has learnt of late
That to speculate
In real estate
Brings money along at a greater rate
Than passing around the bag.
So she's found the capital value out
Of St. John's Within and St. Jude's Without,
And the churches will all go up the spout,
And Balham will get the swag.

and Planning won a notable rear-guard action. But Piece-Meal was by no means finished and staged a snappy come-back when it ran up Faraday

House the new Post Office Building, to ruin the perspective of St. Paul's.

Another of London's town-planners was Inigo Jones, who designed the squares of Covent Garden and Lincoln's Inn Fields; and who was followed by a regular platoon of square-makers who laid out St. James's, Grosvenor, Berkeley, and the Bloomsburies. But Piece-Meal was soon in its best form among the Squares, working away with its little hatchet, cutting, paring, lopping. It is in the Squares that Piece-Meal brought off two notable coups, the Russell Hotel and the Imperial Hotel, both in Russell Square. St. James's, the home of clubs and dukes and prime ministers was one of the last to fall. A few years ago, a firm of contractors noticed that a lease had fallen in, tore the house down, dug a great hole in the ground, and then departed, whether to Carey Street, or to Australia, or to a castle in Scotland, I do not know. Now another firm has come along and is busy filling up the hole in the ground, but the work has not sufficiently advanced to let the trembling Londoner see what sort of a tooth is going to be inserted in the gap. Bedford Square is the last of all to remain untouched, and there is a secret and dangerous threat even to Bedford Square, for the British Museum lies asleep just behind it, and at any moment it may turn over and begin to stretch, and when it does, one whole side of Bedford Square will topple to the ground. (The very existence of the Museum in Bloomsbury is a beautiful example of the Piece-Meal method. South Kensington is the ideal museum quarter for London, and Bloomsbury the university quarter, so by an ingenious compromise, both districts have a part of each.)

Trafalgar Square has been a play-ground for the Piece-Meal School, but the play went almost past a joke when the new South Africa Building was inserted with the same sublime disregard for its surroundings that is shown by the concrete battleship of Broadcasting House in the Portland Place of the Brothers Adam.

But the Brothers Adam are out of date and their Portland Place and their Adelphi will have to go. The only people who seem to value the Adams nowadays are to be found in that small, but industrious class of burglar which breaks into houses in order to steal Adam mantlepieces.

Almost the last of London's town planners was poor old John Nash who laid out St. James's Park, the Green Park, Carlton House Terrace, the Duke of York's Column, Regent Street, and the houses at Regent's Park, and was himself laid out the other day by Mr. A. S. Gaye, Permanent Commissioner of Crown Lands. Regent Street, of course, has gone and the Crown Commissioners have got their hooks upon the rest. It is significant that when Sir Reginald Blomfield last year suggested that he might replace Nash in the Carlton area, he apparently forgot that some of the leases still had sixty years to run, so deeply ingrained is the Piece-Meal habit among the Piece-Meal champions. Nash had a Plan, and Sir Reginald has a Plan, but there is one practical difference between them, Nash's Plan could be put into operation, Sir Reginald's cannot. And the difference, when one is concerned with so concrete an art as architecture, is a very considerable one.

Thomas Cubitt also did some town-planning in a modest way, in the twenties and thirties of the last century. Cubitt was a journeyman-carpenter who later became a building-contractor, and he contracted with the Duke of Westminster to build on the notoriously evil district called the Five Fields, where footpads lurked and murderers laid ambushes and noblemen fought each other with rapier and flint-lock. The result of his planning was Belgrave Square, Lowndes Square, and Chesham and Eaton Places, and Eaton Square, and later on he built over the ground between Eaton Square and the Thames. So far, his work remains untouched for some peculiar reason.

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But the changing of London only seems to take place where change is little wanted, and not where changes are of desperate urgency. The tearing down of old Devonshire House in Piccadilly and the building of a vast block of palatial flats was quickly followed by Grosvenor House and Dorchester House and many others. But precious few changes have been made in Commercial Road East, and precious few blocks of flats have appeared in the Pennyfields, and in the sordid little lanes off the Mile End Road. There appears to be unlimited cash available for the construction of offices and the maintenance of them without any tenants, but there is very little available for rebuilding the houses of the working-classes. Nearer home, in Westminster for instance, there is a great activity of building for the working-classes, and Sir Edwin Lutyens has designed some really beautiful blocks in the neighbourhood of the Horseferry Road. But, admirable though these blocks are, the point is that the necessity for them should never have arisen. They are in the very centre of London. Smith Square, a fashionable and expensive square, is round the corner ; the Seat of Government is half-a-mile away ; the Abbey is practically across the road. And yet there were slums, still are slums, so near to the heart of the Empire. Picture, then, the changes which are crying aloud to Heaven to be made in Deptford, in Whitechapel, in Shoreditch, and a hundred other grim spots where the white topper does not blossom nor the fur coat flourish nor the Phantom Rolls murmur as it carries its load of pure brain to the Houses of Parliament. If such things can be done in Westminster, what is being done in the East ?

But why the East ? Why go as far as the East ? Wander north with me a little, past the pale-blue misty valleys of Hyde Park and up the quiet, wealthy terraces of Porchester and Queensborough, and Inverness, and Leinster. All is still, and Stucco, and very Doric, and very, very grand. It is the great region of Bayswater, which in ancient days provided the water for Baynard, Lord of the Manor, and in exchange got its name from him. A hundred years ago they used to cultivate Water-cress there, but now it is Refinement. We saunter down Westbourne Terrace, built over the West Stream which rises in Kilburn and flows down to the Serpentine

(in old days it used to skirt Sloane Street and was crossed by a bridge where now is Pont Street), pondering as we go upon the solidity of residential London which is built upon the twin rocks of the Pension and the Preference Share, and suddenly we turn a corner and find ourselves in slum-land. Yes, real, genuine, slum-land. There are rows of charming little houses which Progress has converted into dirty, overcrowding lodgings. There are the usual crowds of cheerful, dirty, screaming urchins, pretending to be Hobbs against a lamp-post, or dribbling in the style of Mr. Gallacher a bundle of rags towards an imaginary goal. Near-by is the junction of the Grand Junction Canal and the Regent's Canal (Nash built the stone-work, the arches, the tunnels of the Regent's Canal), where the water is just as muddy, and the presence of deceased cats is just as likely, as anything the Grand Canal at Venice can claim. Here is plenty of scope for a change in London, without having to go so far away as the Mile End Road. It was not for nothing that the brilliant Miss Violet Loraine placed her most famous cockney song of love in the alley-ways "on the banks of the Regent's Canal." But in Paddington the dark, mysterious Forces of the modern world seem to be just as determined to preserve, as they are elsewhere to destroy. "Threats, prayers, entreaties," in the words of Ko-Ko, Lord High Executioner of Titipu, all were useless to preserve Barking Town House. Threats, prayers, entreaties all seem useless to destroy Paddington slum-land. Yet some of the ground upon which these slums are built belongs to whom? To rapacious private landlords? To absentee magnates? To a modern rack-renting Sartorius with his retinue of rent-squeezing Lichcheeses? By no means. By no manner of means. The ground-landlords of a part of the Paddington slums are no less an eminent, no less a worthy body than the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of the Church of England. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the House of God," said Ecclesiastes, the Preacher, "and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil." So God's in His Heaven, all's well with Paddington.

And yet there is, apparently, no law by which the Commissioners can compel their lessees and sub-lessees, and sub-sub-lessees, to improve the conditions from which the Commissioners draw ground-rents. The Commissioners are as anxious as anyone to remove the stigma from their sources of revenue. But apparently it cannot be done.

And yet, and yet, is all so well with that famous borough? Not so many months ago a voice suddenly cried out, if not in the wilderness at least in the New Forest, when the Parochial Church Council of Lymington, in the Diocese of Winchester, passed unanimously the following resolution:

That the Parochial Church Council of Lymington, though well aware that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have earned the gratitude of the Church for much difficult work well done, regrets that even a relatively small portion of its income is derived from the London Bishoprick Paddington Estate in West London, which is notoriously in a regrettable condition as regards sanitation, overcrowding, etc. The Council would be glad if, even at the risk of a diminished revenue, the

Commissioners would either by legislation or by any other means open to them, relieve the Church of England as a whole from this reproach.

(2) That this P.C.C. do seriously consider ways and means of assisting the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to rectify the conditions whereby large sums of money are drawn by the Church from ground rents of slum property.

If Lymington is right, what is the answer of the Commissioners? If Lymington is wrong, it should telegraph at once to any of the larger Oxford Street emporia for an immediate consignment of sackcloth, and to the Gas, Light and Coke Company for some hundredweights of ashes.

Changing London. How often it changes its details for the worse, and how seldom its structure for the better. The making of Kingsway in 1905 was a notable structural change, but how many others have there been? The Embankment perhaps. I can recall no others. Charing Cross Station is still sprawling across the great space which lies between the City and the Seat of Government. That villainous railway is still allowed to strangle West Kensington and Earls Court. Victoria Street, built as a Processional Way from Palace to Abbey missed the Abbey in the end. The south bank is so tangled up with cuttings and viaducts and criss-cross lines of rails and bridges that it is one vast mass of unalterable culs-de-sac. A single horse, slipping on the macadamized glass of Jermyn Street, can exercise a baleful influence on east-west traffic in Piccadilly from the Quadriga at Hyde Park Corner to the borders of Leicester Square. But every day the details are being changed, and almost always for the worse. "London is the auction-room of the world," wrote Mr. James Bone in his *London Perambulator* :

Somewhere the hammer is always falling: 'Going! Going! Gone!' The items fall; the last of the great City mansions that had survived from Plantagenet times, a famous theatre, an inn of Chancery, a prison, a historic school, the General Post Office, an entertainment palace, a City church, hotels and taverns with long pedigrees, a meeting-house. Any Londoner of twenty years' standing can remember the passing of every one of these, for after the auctioneer's hammer falls on such unportable property the housebreaker's pickaxe is soon heard and it tumbles down like London bridges and penny rolls. And in a few years we are disputing over its site as though it had happened before the Great Fire. Events march quickly in London once they march at all, and memories are short, as befits a trading capital.

Hurricanes of 'development' have swept over districts that for one reason or other had survived their money-making service, and in a year these parts have been so transformed that recent tenants lose their way in them. Many of these places had kept their good looks, despite shabbiness, to the last, and the sentimental Londoner regretting their passing must often have wished that they could have been somehow turned out to grass like a favourite horse that had done fine service in his day.

There is only one good thing that can come out of all this money-grubbing destruction of the beautiful and the historical and the antique, and that is that, at long last, a sense of inheritance may be aroused at least among the citizens of London, so that they rise in their wrath and insist

upon a preservation of what is worth preserving and a Town-Planning of the rest. "To create surfaces of exquisite beauty," to quote once more the noble words of Messrs. Pinchin, Johnson's advertisement, "and to enforce, at the same time, full and lasting protection," should be the aim of the Civic and Municipal patriotism of the Londoner. It is all very well for Sir Thomas Browne to declaim that pyramids, arches, obelisks are the irregularities of vain-glory, and the wild enormities of ancient magnanimity. I prefer to quote Mr. James Bone again :

And how often do the London nights with their moist softness and delicate shadows seem to have beauties bred only there. The London lover likes to remember that it was in London that Whistler discovered the nocturne. In the wide reaches of the river at night he found the silence and space in the midst of the complicated resounding town that his exasperated nature sought, and into these nocturnes he has imparted a strange tension of beauty as though at any moment something might snap, and the chartered Thames and its warehouses and lights along the banks might suddenly not be there, only a wide, nameless creek, with forests at its swampy sides under the night.

Ninety-nine times the Planners let the Piece-meal Hackers and Chippers have their way. But they do ask that in the hundredth case the Hackers will stand aside. It is not much to ask, when one remembers that they would like, if they had their way, to take the Hackers and drown them.



Woodcut by JAMES LINDSAY

CORRESPONDENCE

GRITH FYRD CAMPS

(To the Editor of THE LONDON MERCURY)

SIR.—The organisation known as Grith Fyrd Camps ("Grith," Peace and "Fyrd," Militia) has come into existence in response to the present situation. A chain of permanent camp-communities is being formed in which young men of all classes can live a worth-while life, even though precluded from earning a living. It is more than an "Unemployment Scheme": for it aims at filling needs. "The command of nature has been put into man's hands before he knows how to command himself."

The first camp is at Godshill, near Fordingbridge, on the north-western edge of the New Forest. When equipped and fully established the camps will approximately maintain themselves. The money paid by those who participate—£1 weekly by non-insured persons and the State Unemployment or other Benefit by the men entitled to them—will supply the greater part of their needs; the work of the men themselves will provide the balance.

Those working within the scheme, while living a full and healthy life, will find time to provide an increasing proportion of each other's needs. They will avoid competition, by sale of goods or services, with the industrial community; the contributions required from it for their upkeep will diminish as their powers of self-help increase. Their life whilst "unemployed," though not rich in comfort, will be full of interest, affording an honourable and adventurous alternative to industrial life. The men who come to the camps are drawn by the prospect of adventure and of national service; they form a community closely resembling that of a university, where young men of varied experience and outlook compare views and work together.

Those who come from public schools and universities will be able to contribute the full cost of their maintenance. On each of the others there is a weekly deficit and help is required to meet this as well as for the equipment of new camps and for the expenses of management. The address for contributions or enquiries is:—Grith Fyrd Camps, Toynbee Hall, London, E.1.

The camps offer to a man a real opportunity to work out his own salvation. The undersigned appeal to all who feel the gravity of the present situation to see to it that the where-withal to equip these camps is not lacking. Their assistance will enable the threat of disaster to become the means of renaissance.—Yours, etc.

LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE,	J. SCOTT LIDGETT,
J. R. BELLERBY.	JOHN MACMURRAY,
MARGARET C. BONDFIELD,	ARNOLD S. ROWNTREE,
RONALD C. DAVISON,	MICHAEL E. SADLER,
LAURENCE HOUSMAN,	MARY TREVELYAN,
EDITH M. HULSE,	AUBREY T. WESTLAKE,
	<i>Chairman,</i>
	J. NORMAN GLAISTER,
	<i>Hon. Secretary.</i>

Toynbee Hall.
May 12th, 1933.



THE WIDOWER

Drawing by JOHN NICHOLAS

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES & NEWS

Correspondence from readers on all subjects of bibliographical interest is invited. Our Correspondent will, to the best of his ability, answer all queries addressed to him.

GENERAL NOTES

ONE is often called upon to admire the thoroughness with which American librarians set about the task of forming representative collections of one type of book or another. Two instances have recently come to my notice. Everyone who is interested in eighteenth century poetry knows that Messrs. Dobell, of 8 Bruton Street, have over a great many years been amassing a very large collection of the anonymous poetical pamphlets of the century. In the third part of their Catalogue of eighteenth century verse, issued two or three months ago, a beginning was made of cataloguing the anonymous poems, of which some one hundred-and-thirty, covering only the letter A and part of B, were listed. Mr. Percy Dobell now informs me that he has sold not merely these, but the whole of his anonymous eighteenth century poems (except, of course, for duplicates) to the Library of the University of Connecticut. This is an event on which one would like to congratulate both parties—Messrs. Dobell upon having their patience rewarded and the value of their work recognised, and the University on acquiring a collection of the very greatest interest, which will provide an immense amount of material for study. The second example of American thoroughness is brought to my notice by the receipt of a well-produced octavo volume of more than 380 pages, *A Check List of Fifteenth Century Books in the Newberry Library and in Other Libraries of Chicago*, compiled by Dr. Pierce Butler. Dr. Butler is the first Custodian of the John M. Wing Foundation of the Newberry Library, and since 1920 the funds of the Wing bequest have been devoted chiefly to acquiring specimens of European typography of the fifteenth century—chosen more for their importance in the history of writing than for their standing as collectors' rarities. In pursuance of this policy more than thirteen hundred incunables have been acquired by the library since 1920, and Dr. Butler has paid five visits to Europe in search of these books. The total number of *incunabula* in institutional libraries in and around Chicago is now 1,888, of which 1,618 are in the Newberry Library and 145 in the Library of the University of Chicago. A pleasant feature of Dr. Butler's *Check List* is the high tribute paid in the Introduction to the scholarship of, and help received from, many of the leading English and Continental booksellers. The arrangement of the List is primarily by the Countries and Towns in which the books were printed, and there is an Index which simplifies the finding of a particular book, author, or printer. This *Check List* is not being put generally on the book-market, but a few copies are for sale at \$5 each, and may be had from the Newberry Library, Chicago.

THE first part of volume 30 of *Book-Auction Records* is now out, and may be had from Messrs. Henry Stevens, Son and Stiles, of 39 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1 (annual subscription, £1 10s.). It covers sales in Edinburgh, Glasgow and London during October, November and December, 1932. Incidentally I may mention that there is a misprint on the cover, which refers to the Auction Season 1931-32 instead of 1932-33. But perhaps my copy is of a "rare first issue with misprint at foot of front cover"—who knows? Over 3,800 records are given. It is a pleasure to draw attention once more to this perennially useful compilation.

ANOTHER old standby of these notes is the quarterly magazine of the Bibliographical Society, *The Library* (Oxford University Press. 5s. per issue, or 18s. per annum, post free). The current number (the last of Volume XIII, New Series) opens with an illustrated article by Mr. E. P. Goldschmidt on *Some Cuir-Ciselé Bindings in English Libraries*. Other papers include *The Vesalian Compendium of Geminus and Nicholas Udall's Translation*, by Dr. S. V. Larkey; *Parliament and the Press, 1643-7*, by Mr. W. M. Clyde; and *The First Decade of Printing in the Royal Province of South Carolina*, by Mr. D. C. McMurtrie. Mr. Clifford Leech writes an interesting note on a curious cancel in Southerne's play *The Disappointment*, published in 1684.

NOTES ON SALES

THE second portion of Mr. H. Chester Beatty's Western Manuscripts was sold at Sotheby's on May 9th, and realised £17,750 for 36 lots. One lot, an Italian St. Augustine of the eighth century, was withdrawn, having been sold privately with a view to its presentation to the Nation. The lot to fetch the highest bid—£2,100—was the *Book of Hours*, illustrated by Jean Fouquet, but the impression was that this was bought in. All, or nearly all, the other items seemed, however, to be genuinely sold, and the prices were satisfactory for these times—though they must have represented some loss (one guesses at 25 or 30 per cent) on what they cost their collector. The chief things were the following:—*Latin Gospels*, School of Tours, ninth century, £1,500; the *Seitenstellen Gospels*, Austrian, twelfth century, £1,150; *Psalter*, Neapolitan, fourteenth century, £1,250; and the "de Levis" *Hours*, French, fifteenth century, £1,500. The last lot was bought by Mr. Schever, the well-known American dealer, and it was pleasant to see American bidding in this sale again—for in last year's portion there was none. Several lots were also bought by Continental dealers.

ITEMS FROM THE BOOKSHOPS AND CATALOGUES

ONE of the most interesting things to observe in the book-world at present is the way in which booksellers' catalogues are now changing their tone and tending to throw the emphasis upon the less expensive, or even the definitely cheap, books. This, in so far as it is a sign of hard times, may be regrettable, but in itself it is no bad thing, for in the boom years catalogues had a habit of leading one to believe that it was useless to attempt to collect books unless one was a millionaire, or thereabouts. A copy of Messrs. Pickering's & Chatto's catalogue number 280 (issued from their shop at 1 King Street, St. James', London, S.W.1) has lately reached this office, and one cannot help being struck by the fact that it consists almost entirely of books priced at less than a pound each—many of them, indeed, cost as little as three shillings, and a few even less. Catalogues of this sort, coming from West End dealers, should tempt back to book-collecting some of those who have given it up in despair. A great many of the things listed are second, third and later editions of well-known books—editions which are often of considerable value for textual purposes, and which should attract orders from University Libraries and the like—but first editions are by no means absent. A few of the latter that I notice are:—Matthew Arnold, *Literature and Dogma*, 8vo., 1873, 18s.; Charles Churchill, *The Apology*, 4to., 1761, 7s. 6d.; Richard Doyle, *An Overland Journey to the Great Exhibition*, oblong 12mo., [1851], 6s.; William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 4to., 1753, 10s. 6d.; and William Whitehead, Poet Laureate, *The Goat's Beard*, 4to., 1777, 10s.; *An Hymn to the Nymph of Bristol Spring*, 4to., 1751, 10s., *Variety: a Tale for Married People*, 4to,

1776, 7s. 6d., and *Verses to the People of England*, 4to., 1758, 10s. These are not, admittedly, what are sometimes called "High Spots." But each of them is a book of some interest, by a reputable author, and well worth a few shillings for the interest or amusement it can give one. When books of this sort are priced in shillings they are very well worth collecting, but it is extremely doubtful whether they are worth buying when their prices are in guineas. I only hope that this list of moderately priced books will meet with an encouraging response from collectors and libraries.

MESSRS. MAGGS, of 34 and 35 Conduit Street, London, W., have issued an important and freely illustrated catalogue (number 582) of books on Medicine, Magic and Natural Sciences, to which I draw the attention of all readers of this Magazine who are interested in old scientific books, many of which are extremely curious. Even as reproduced in this catalogue the illustrations they contain are often both strange and beautiful, as witness, in particular, one of the illustrations of John Bannister's *The Historie of Man, Sucked from the Sappe of the Most Approved Anathomistes*, folio, 1578, which is said by the catalogue to be one of the rarest of English Anatomical Books. The illustration in question is a full-page wood-cut of "The Sceleton of the Backe" which shows a naked skeleton walking amidst lilies and other plants—a most gruesome and yet lovely thing. Messrs. Maggs offer a fine copy of this book for £180.

AN interesting form of catalogue is that recently adopted by Messrs. Henry Sotheran, of 43 Piccadilly, London, W.1. This is a series of brochures entitled *Piccadilly Notes*, the second of which lies before me as I write. It opens with an instalment of Mr. J. H. Stonehouse's "Adventures in Bookselling," in which he tells how he packed the Althorp Library for removal to Manchester in 1892. Sections of *Piccadilly Notes* are also given up to Bibliographical Books, Books on Costumes and Coloured Caricatures by James Gillray. There are numerous illustrations, which help to make a very bright and varied catalogue—which includes, by the way, a short chronicle of recent auction-room prices.

A BOTANICAL Catalogue (number 21) containing, for the most part, inexpensive books, reaches me from Mr. John H. Knowles, of 23a Beulah Hill, London, S.E.19. Collectors of local English Floras will find many things in this list to interest them—for example, G. Johnston's *Flora of Berwick*, 2 volumes, 12mo., 1829-31, 7s. 6d., and A. R. Pryor's *Flora of Hertfordshire*, 8vo., 1887, 16s. In all there are 456 items in this list.

A FEW months ago the firm of Maurice, of 23 Bedford Street, Covent Garden, London, W.C.2, came under the proprietorship of Messrs. Putnams, and took the style of Nattali & Maurice Ltd. Nattali, I believe, is the name of a proprietor of the business a good many years ago—how many exactly I am not sure. The other day I received from this shop a small catalogue, number 255, containing some 200 or more miscellaneous books, mostly at very reasonable prices. They include some modern first editions (e.g., by Sir J. M. Barrie, Mr. Max Beerbohm, Arnold Bennett, and Mr. H. G. Wells), publications of the Golden Cockerell and Nonesuch Presses, and a few older books.

I. A. WILLIAMS

BOOK-PRODUCTION NOTES

A CHRONICLER'S TRILEMMA.

IT often happens that in his account of contemporary book-production the chronicler must take note of books which deserve his readers' attention on other grounds than those of mere paper, print and binding ;—that and no more is his normal *pabulum*. This is especially true of any original work : if the book has intrinsic merit, the details of its material production have an interest quite subordinate to its importance as literature. It is true also of any book which has engravings, or indeed illustrations of any kind for its principal feature. To discuss them as a mere feature of book-production may be to fail in giving them their due as works of art. On the other hand, to appraise their merits apart from their place in the book may well be an impertinence on the part of one whose outlook is as strictly professional as that of the critic in *The Tailor and Cutter*, who year by year discusses sartorially the pictures at the Royal Academy. He may quite justly note how well or how ill the pictures accord with their setting in the book ; how far the designer or engraver has been able to accommodate himself to the method and materials of letterpress printing ; or, on the other hand, how the printer has adapted his types and his press-work so as to show the artist's work to the best advantage possible. Successful book-illustration calls for team-work on the part of the artist and his printer. The printer's success in rendering the picture is, however, something to be considered apart from the technical or artistic merit of the engravings ; and that again is something apart from their value as illustrations of an author's text. The cobbler may rightly be accused of going beyond his last if he ventures to appraise or to dispraise either of these. Yet to say nothing about them is to pass over just those features of the book which most claim attention. So the chronicler is likely to say too little, or to say too much, or to say the wrong thing.

THE GREGYNOG PRESS APOCALYPSE.*

THE fine volume in which the Gregynog Press and especially Mr. Blair Hughes-Stanton have set forth the Book of the Revelation of St. John, affords a good example of the chronicler's trilemma. In discussing the production of the work he is on safe ground. There is first of all the printing of the book, which is admirable. The type is Bembo in its generous 16-pt size ; and Eric Gill's Perpetua Titling, which is now cast by Stephenson & Blake at Sheffield, is used in three different sizes to mark the openings of chapters and some of the more dramatic passages. The paper is Japanese vellum, and the book is bound in hermitage calf of a dark reddish-brown shade, lettered blind on the back and side. The captions and chapter openings are partly printed in brown ink ; and the closing lines of each chapter, set in upper-case letters of its own, are also printed in brown. These lines of 16-pt Bembo capitals are a very beautiful feature ; but the diversity of sizes used in the captions and also the epigraphic arrangement with which many of them are set, give restlessness to some of the pages. The principal chapter-headings are in part pictorial ; so that they are made up of three elements—picture, engraved lettering and type.

* *The Revelation of Saint John the Divine*. With engravings by Blair Hughes-Stanton. Folio. 250 copies. The Gregynog Press, Newtown, Montgomeryshire. Six guineas.

What of the illustrations themselves, over forty in number, of which thirteen are full-page engravings? Can the Book of Revelation with all its gorgeous imagery be illustrated with any kind of adequacy—with any kind of propriety—in black and white? The Apocalypse was a favourite picture-book of the Middle Ages; but then there was illumination to gild and colour the pages; and the miniaturists of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had a long hieratic tradition behind them. Admirers of Mr. Hughes-Stanton's work are likely to rank these engravings as technically the most brilliant work which he has yet done; and he has been excellently served by his printer in the rendering of his fine white lines and delicately graded half-tones. Yet many will feel that he has failed in his interpretation of the apocalyptic vision. His treatment will offend also many of those who treasure the traditions of Christian iconography. But here the cobbler is going beyond his last.

THE LATE CHARLES T. JACOBI.

A LONG and memorable chapter in the history of English printing has closed with the death of Mr. Charles T. Jacobi. His connection with the Chiswick Press began with his apprenticeship in 1866. He served with it for the rest of his active life, first as assistant, then as manager, and afterwards as managing partner. He retired from the active direction of it in 1919, remaining with it three years longer as consulting director. While he controlled the Press, he worthily sustained the high traditions which it had inherited from the Whittinghams and especially from its association with William Pickering. There is, indeed, some grounds for the claim made some years since in a letter to the LONDON MERCURY by Mr. C. Sandford, who learned printing under Jacobi, that:

the popular modern lay-out of title-page and book is based on the practice of the Chiswick Press from about 1840 onwards, first under Whittingham then Jacobi.

As managing partner of the Chiswick Press Jacobi helped William Morris with his early experiments in printing; and after his death the types of the Kelmscott Press were put in his hands for custody and for occasional use under the direction of the trustees. Herbert Horne, Gleeson White and H. B. Wheatley were three more of the notable bookmen some of whose work was printed at the office in Took's Court. It may be said quite truly, I think, that most of the finer printing done in England during the latter years of last century came from the Chiswick Press. Mr. Jacobi's manual on *Printing*, a sixth edition of which appeared in 1919, is still a standard textbook.

B. H. NEWDIGATE

CHRONICLES

MUSIC

THE MUSIC OF BACH. An Introduction by CHARLES SANFORD TERRY. Oxford University Press. (Humphrey Milford). 3s. 6d.

GRAMOPHONE RECORDINGS.

ONCE again the musical world has cause to thank Professor Terry for his tireless enthusiasm for Bach. His latest present to us is his *Music of Bach*. He calls it an "Introduction" with considerable modesty: but it is in fact a complete guide to Bach's music, in which I believe no one, however great a student of Bach will not be able to find much that is new; and all conductors, organists, Bach-players in general, and the music-loving public will find a great deal that is of the first importance in an understanding of Bach's work.

Professor Terry has done what any sound scholar should in making an intensive study of the original Manuscripts and Documents by or relating to Johann Sebastian Bach, his family and the surroundings in which he moved. In the cases where his own knowledge is not sufficient, as in the case of his research into Bach's Orchestra and the instruments he used, he has asked the opinion of experts: the result of this work is that he has produced the most sound, learned and reliable guide to Bach's works we are likely to see unless further evidence is discovered.

He has divided his book into sections: he begins with an admirably concise account of Bach's career: followed by chapters on the organ, clavier, chamber Music, and the *Musikalisches Opfer* and *Kunst der Fuge* grouped under the general heading of Instrumental Music: and the Cantatas, Oratorios, Passion, Funeral, Latin and Secular Cantatas under the heading of Vocal Music. At the end he provides most valuable folding Tables of the Organ, Klavier and Chamber Music, showing the dates of composition, with references to the principal editions.

His task is immense: for Bach attempted, with the possible exception of opera, all the forms of music current in his day, besides reviving old forms and inventing new. Professor Terry's first approach to Bach was, as a cathedral organist, through his cantatas and sacred music: and we have had in a less compact form the results of his researches on this side for some years past. And he would wish us to regard Bach as first and foremost a great churchman according to the Lutheranism of his times. Perhaps the first thing we should note in Bach's life is his intensive study of the Bible and the immediate results as shown in his work. For Bach the Bible was a vivid pictorial reality, every word of which was inspired and must be treated with individual care. To illustrate his vivid imaginings of the events of the Bible he used musical symbols which are as clearly recognisable to a careful listener as the leit-motifs in a Wagner opera. Like Handel he will picture the rolling serpentine gait of Satan: he will follow the halting steps of Christ's approach to Calvary in the halting rhythm of his accompaniment. Pain, horror, grief, joy are always vividly painted in the symbols and their variants, which Professor Terry has set out in his book on the Cantatas. Bach was always a musical opportunist; he would seize on a pictorial word or phrase and elaborate the idea, just as he would seize on some festival of the

church to portray the appropriate emotion : one has only to compare his music for Easter and his music for Good Friday to see how much he allowed himself to be affected by the seasons of the Christian year.

Next to the Bible his great text-book was the Lutheran Hymn-Book. His devotion to it and his close study of it is witnessed by his constant use of the melodies in his Church Cantatas ; his marvellous harmonisations of the tunes which, however hard we may try to imitate we can never hope to approach—harmonisations rich in vocal and contrapuntal genius which put our nineteenth-century hymn-writers to perpetual shame ; and finally the joy with which he embroidered them in his Chorale Preludes, turning one into a psalm of praise, another into a wistfully sympathetic meditation, another into a deep-felt cry from the soul. It is impossible to realise the depth of Bach's feeling without some study of the Chorale Preludes. Those who claim Bach as a cold passionless contrapuntist find there their immediate refutation. There is perfect music, joined with perfectly satisfying and genuine emotional expression ranging from the innocent straightforward style of the folk song to a "decadent" revelling in sensuality of texture and sound which Ravel or Strauss in their different ways might have envied.

Bach's Passion Music has never been excelled or even imitated : its deep appeal to the present day was shown by the crowds which occupied all the seats and stood wherever there was space at the performance in St. Paul's Cathedral recently, a performance specially notable for the use of the harpsichord as Bach would have wished, and as he expressly directed. Unfortunately St. Paul's Cathedral has transepts, and his quickly moving basses become easily blurred in buildings where unlike Bach's own Thomaskirche at Leipzig, there are transepts : for in a strictly Protestant Church the attention is directed away from the altar to the Preacher and all facilities should be given to the audience to hear the preacher's speech in the vernacular with its short clipped sound, so unlike the sonorous Latin of the Catholic Ritual, which demands the reverberation of its rolling open sounds. In a Protestant Church fast-moving basses may be employed without the fear of their movement being blurred.

The Great B minor or "High" Mass is Bach's own devotional version of the Catholic Mass, its ritual between the Catholic and the Lutheran versions existing in his day. Men of our own times, such as Vaughan Williams, regard it as the outstandingly perfect work of art and devotion in music.

Church Music has kept its traditions and its organs at least approximately the same since Bach. Secular Music with the decrease in the number of Courts and the growth of concert rooms has altered in character. So it is that while we often hear quite excellent performances of Bach's Church music, it is rare indeed that we hear even a tolerable performance of his secular work or one in which the number of performers and instrumentation is even approximately that of his day.

A great deal of Bach's secular music was written at Cöthen, the Brandenburg Concertos, the French and English Suites, the violin concertos. All were written probably with a performance at the Court in view, and for a limited number of players—the keyboard suites to be played by Bach himself. No one can understand Bach without taking into consideration the harpsichord. All the chamber works without exception have a part for the Continuo, namely for harpsichord and 'cello or gamba, occasionally also, but only where directed for violone (light double-bass) or double bass. The harpsichord filled up the harmonies from a shorthand "the figured bass" which often extends the harmonies covered by the other instruments and it should be remembered by its system of octave stops the harpsichord sounded

the filling-in in two or three octaves at once : it gave bite and edge to the string playing and provided a delicate shimmer of harmonic substance. Even the harpsichord concertos have a separate continuo part or else have the figured bass shorthand notation in the *Tutti* passages. Besides the harpsichord which he called "Cembalo" or (the only technical slip in Terry's book that I can see) the "Clavecin," Bach had the clavichord, an exquisitely sensitive instrument of very small tone. On both of these Bach advocated strongly the *cantabile* style. For this latter instrument he wrote the Inventions, the first and most of the second book of the "48" : for the former the Suites and Partitas, Chromatic Fantasy, Italian Concerto and Goldberg Variations, in all of which he makes full use of the harpsichord's typical contrasts of tone and its broad and brilliant *cantabile* possibilities. On both instruments a far greater *legato* is possible than on the piano and organ, and a great player can sweep the separate notes into a continuous stream of tone, phrasing on broad lines as if with a bowed instrument. The Partitas in particular contain much of his loveliest and most personal music.

Bach's Organ Music includes much of his grandest and most virtuoso writing. He had large organs with full pedal-boards at his disposal, except at Cöthen : he had a great knowledge of the earlier music for the instrument, and embraced the German, Italian and Dutch styles in his own majestic conceptions. From contemporary accounts we learn that he played both loud and fast, a direct contrast to his clavichord style.

Professor Terry provides an interesting theory of the name of the "English" Suites, made more probable by the existence of a MS. of Purcell's Toccata in his own writing ; besides much historical information which is really essential for any performer of Bach. The low price of the book leaves no further excuse for inaccurate performances of Bach's work.

Sir Thomas Beecham's transcription of Handel Ballet Music, the *Origin of Design*, has lately been brilliantly recorded by the Columbia Gramophone Company. Sir Thomas, except for an impertinent canon in the "Musette" has dealt sympathetically with Handel's scoring, and conducts the work with superb gusto : even lowbrows should be delighted with the record. The same company has also recorded M. Poulenc playing two of his "Novelettes" and a "Caprice" in his usual dashing and rhythmical style. The Caprice has some superbly vulgar tunes, and the first "Novelette" is beautifully and unaffectedly simple and charming, and should be in the repertoire of many more pianists : the record altogether is gay and delightful. Prokovieff's name first came before the public through his March and Scherzo from *The Love of the Three Oranges*. The Parlophone Company produce a series of further selections from the opera, well played and well recorded : though the first side of Record I is pure descriptive music and not too well suited to the gramophone, I cannot imagine why the charmingly sensuous and Ravelian "Prince et Princesse" scene has been so long kept from us. These records are well worth buying.

VERE PILKINGTON

THE TALKIES

LE SANG D'UN POÈTE. Cocteau. Film Society. Tivoli.

KING KONG. Schoedsack-Cooper. Radio. Coliseum.

F.P.I. Hartl. Ufa. Marble Arch Pavilion.

DER TRAUMENDE MUND (DREAMING LIPS). Czinner. Matador. Academy.

COUNTER-PLAN. Soyus kino. Soviet Embassy, London.

IF you start with a girl in the paw of a fifty-foot ape, or a poet who finds the mouth he erased from a portrait coming to life on his hand, it is clear you are entering another world. Therein you would not dream of applying the standards of this. Those people may be right, therefore, who say that it does not matter that the monsters in *King Kong* are badly brought to life, and that it is irrelevant that the grass through which they pass is not trodden; but is it not strange that finding it, apparently, very sur-realistic of the ape to vary—so obligingly—in size, they insist on applying to *Le Sang D'Un Poète* those same discarded standards of rational conduct?

Cocteau's film is not meant to be outwardly realistic—it is realer than that. That is the first point for gratitude. The second is that it is made without any concession to the outer world. Cocteau goes into the unconscious; my one criticism is that he does not go far enough, for he does not make the return journey, which is both the artist's test and stimulation. But that personal opinion does not prevent recognition of the fact that watching the film you are aware of a poet talking in his own tongue. That is so rare an experience that whether it is also yours is beside the point. If it is not, you probably walk out, and that is one form of response. Several people did walk out from *Le Sang D'Un Poète*, just as twelve thousand were turned away from *King Kong* on Easter Monday. That is typical of our age. In the former, the spectacle of blood coming out of a dying boy's mouth is held to be disgusting because it is affecting; in the latter, the wanton destruction of a trainload of people, and the squashing of a human being under an ape's foot, are not, it would seem, for the simple reason that one is unmoved. This should mean that the film is a failure—but twelve thousand people were turned away the first day. *King Kong*, in short, shelves the intellect, and the censors know that and pass it. Were it really impressive, did it know how to play on the nerves of the mind, did it dare do what it sets out to do, breathe imaginatively, it would, like *Le Sang D'Un Poète*, be reserved for private showing, because what touches the mind is dangerous.

It took a year, we are told, for *King Kong* to be made. Well it might. Some people are never content. Others, again, might think all their lives without making anything like it. The film swarms with creatures, of which some look like pterodactyls and others like only large lizards; a super sea-serpent (probably the old original) lives in a pond so shallow that men can nevertheless punt across it; there are hordes of people who share with oysters the distinction of being called "natives," there is a jerky ape, "larger than life and not the least like it," and they all live on an island "where time has stood still," which no doubt explains why it is not on the map. All this, collectively called "a mighty screen fantasy," has been constructed as a tribute to the toughness of American womanhood. It really is a little hard on Fay Wray. But at least she will be able to open a travel bureau if Schoedsack and Cooper ever find it impossible to think of new ways of causing a damsel distress. No one knows more about jungles—not even Edwina Booth, for she made the mistake of going

to a real one for *Trader Horn* and fever has kept her from films ever since. But Fay Wray was hunted by dogs and a maniac in *Hounds of Zaroff* and now, in *King Kong*, she joins a cruise where what happens passes belief. And the producers are anxious that it should pass belief. That is where their tale has a twist, for in the old days they would have done their utmost to make it seem credible. But Fay Wray is captured by Kong, the ape-king, which immediately makes the other animals jealous. One by one they engage him in horny combat. He puts Fay Wray in a tree-top as you or I might hang up a hat. The tree is knocked down, but Fay Wray is used to that. A large bat, looking like man's first (or latest) attempt at a flying-machine, appears. Kong breaks it like a piece of Ryvita—but not before the hero has escaped with Fay Wray down a very strong cable of greenery conveniently trailing over a cliff. She hangs on in a way that would put trained acrobats to shame, but it is just a side-line with her, for the ape, as apes do, snaps the creeper and, falling many feet into a sea below without being dazed, she swims for dear life. You realize how tough she must be still to think life dear, but she runs through miles of rubbery jungle and is so undisturbed by what she has seen, suffered or done, that, after a ladylike sip at a flask, she says "I'm all right."

She is, of course, wrong. Schoedsack and Cooper are after her and their quarry never escapes. Kong is subdued with gas-bombs. They do not affect the human-beings, which is fortunate, as they had no gas-masks. He is then shipped to New York, where he becomes small enough to be exhibited in a theatre. But he recognises Fay Wray, bursts his bonds and, becoming his normal fifty feet, towers over the theatre, reaching into rooms, taking people out of bed and playfully trampling them underfoot when he realises they are not Fay Wray. But he finds her at last and carries her up to the top of the Empire State Building, with remarkable agility for his size. Here aeroplanes shoot him down with machine-guns. They might have shot Fay Wray too, but evidently realising that any ordinary girl would be dead already, the fliers aim straight and Kong crashes to the streets, where his captor tells the police that it was not bullets, but Beauty that killed him. That, when you consider that the beauty in question was a film star, is a double-edged observation only proving that Schoedsack and Cooper are not only sadists but cynics.

It is ingenious, of course. It would be ingenious to photograph a Thames that was ink, with barges of blotting paper. If there were enough barges, they would soak up the ink and then one could start again. *King Kong* is continually having to start again because it is so busy being astounding, it has no time to be plausible, a fault shared by *F. P. I.*, which also wrecks the phantasy it attempts to create through lack of attention to detail. It starts with the excellent and legitimate idea of an artificial island to act as re-fuelling station for planes flying the Atlantic. It continues through a stunt robbery, sabotage, spying, secret flights and a mutiny to a good fight in the wireless room on Floating Platform One, and all these things are dragged in to galvanise a story of two men who are—for once—actually in love with the same girl. It is odd that a picture whose aim is so patently to thrill should lack the audacity to use a new story—perhaps of two men who should love one girl, but don't, or do and are quite happy about it. That might be startling. But to have Conrad Veidt shot at and then make him stand up to enquire "Who is there?" so that he can be shot at again, is not startling. It is not startling to bring in a gale to increase suspense and then forget about it when the hero wishes to fly. It only shows that the director is so harrassed about patching up the old threadbare story that he has not time to attend to details. *F. P. I.* is another film which trips over its own tail in the effort to give a twist to it, and all that emerges is the cynical fact that if you wish to escape

publicity, you must engage a personal publicist, for though the hero's private cameraman turned up everywhere, even in mid-Atlantic, he let him disappear for many months on a flight of which no one knew, or seemed to want to know, the result.

The story of *Der Traumende Mund* also lacks freshness, but Bergner, under Czinner's direction, gives it the equally rare quality of truth. Here is the return journey one misses in connection with Cocteau. Bergner goes through layers of mind without confusing any of them, and she comes back to express them in symbols which, though familiar, make no compromise. The plot concerns a woman who finds herself in love with her husband's best friend, while loving her husband. But Bergner's concern is with what is happening inside the woman and, like *Le Sang D'Un Poète*, this is a film made by someone who believes that that is still, and supremely, important. Bergner, now for the first time revealed to English audiences for what she is, is not that type of star of whose virtuosity I lately complained. She allows the moods of the mind, and what causes them, to come over to us almost without causing any personal hindrance to their communication. As you do not think of sheep-gut when Menuhin plays, you do not think of flesh and blood when watching Bergner. What physical presence one is aware of reminds one of Schumann's voice.

Nothing so inspiring, and little that was interesting, came out of the film chosen to grace M. Maiski's reception at Harrington House. *Counter-Plan* contains all the familiar romanticising of machinery apparently necessary to a race whose own Industrial Revolution is only now taking place. But the glorification of work by labour-saving devices can pall as well as mislead, and the only piquancy lent to this theme of turbine-worship, with its references to sabotage and "Mr. Pratt, the English technical expert," was the fact that it was shown on the day when the release on bail of certain other English experts was announced. A Russian news-reel also shown was, however, so interesting that it is a pity it has not been seen by the public, whose ideas of Russia, as of many things, sprout from not always disinterested sources.

ROBERT HERRING

FICTION—I

THE THIBAULTS. By ROGER MARTIN DU GARD. Bodley Head. 7s. 6d.

GRAND CANARY. By A. J. CRONIN. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

TOM'S-A-COLD. By JOHN COLLIER. Macmillan. 7s. 6d.

FLO. By F. C. BODEN. Dent. 7s. 6d.

AN English edition of the novels of M. Roger du Gard, beginning with *Le Cahier Gris* and *Le Pentecier*, has been looked for for some time by many readers over here : the Bodley Head are to be congratulated upon doing this service to the public. They have now issued these two books in one volume under the title of *The Thibaults* ; in this way they form a continuous story and should be read as such. Their subject is the character of a school boy, condemned to a reformatory by obtuse authority, and nearly rendered imbecile by his treatment. No actual cruelty is necessary for this. The boy, Jacques, is well looked after, materially. It is his spirit that is completely crushed. At the beginning of the story he is a high-spirited, imaginative, young dare-devil, but when his brother goes to see him, in the Institute in which he is confined, he behaves like a listless automaton :

He didn't take his eyes from Jacques, trying to rediscover, in this new face the features he had known. There was still the same reddish hair, a little darker and browner, but still coarse and growing low on the forehead ; there was still the same narrow, ill-formed nose, the same cracked lips, shaded now by an imperceptible down ; the same jaw, but more massive than before, and the same protuberant ears that seemed to be pulling on the mouth, and keeping it drawn out wide. But nothing in it all was like the child of the day before yesterday. "One would think even his temperament had changed," he pondered, "he was so mobile, tormented : and now this flat, sleeping face . . . He so nervous—now he's the lymphatic type.

Antoine is unspeakably disturbed by this change in the youngster, he takes his departure, misses his train on purpose, and returns to the Institute. He insists on taking his brother out for a walk, and, in an unforgettable scene, gradually succeeds in thawing the poor boy's numbed emotions and getting a full confession out of him of the life he is condemned to lead. He is not folded with the rest of the unfortunate little inmates of this "Institute of Moral Hygiene" ; being of a better class (and no criminal) he has been isolated in rooms of his own. Confinement, solitude and utter idleness, though he is supposed to have visits from a tutor, have so eaten into his once highly-strung, nervous calibre, that, even though he weeps at his confession, he will still not admit that he is unhappy, or would wish to be at home again. Antoine, however, some years his senior, and a medical student also, has seen enough to realise the irreparable damage that is being done. He persuades their father to allow him to take a flat of his own and to have Jacques to live with him. The father of the two youths, M. Thibault, complacent, self-seeking and dense (and, by a supreme irony, the founder of the reformatory to which his own son is sent) is, like all the characters in the book, an excellent example of the author's restraint in characterisation. With unsurpassed opportunities for painting pictures of monsters of iniquity, or obliquity, he has realised how unusual such people are and made his villains just the blundering fools they usually are. There is the twittering, effusive and futile M. Faïsmé, head of the Institute, and his lazy subordinates ; the cold, narrow-minded Abbé Binot, Jacques' school master and the discoverer of Jacques' clandestine, but, actually, perfectly innocent correspondence with another school boy ; the feeble, amiable

Abbé Vecard, father confessor to the family ; and, finally, Thibault himself. Each of them are well meaning enough, but not one of them has the sense to see that here is an unusual boy with no faults but those of temperament and poetry.

I do not know if the publishers have in preparation, a further instalment of this saga, but more is obviously indicated. Jacques' development has but just begun ; and the very intriguing characters of his friends, the Fontanins, should certainly be carried forward. They come largely into the first volume, but are more seen again at the end of the second. Madame le Fontanin, her husband, her delightful little daughter and the son Daniel, with whom Jacques gets into his scrapes (actually running away with him to Marseilles) are character studies of exceptional interest.

Mr. Cronin's new novel bears the impression of having been written after the actual experience of a long sea voyage. He knows so exactly what the life is like, what one is compelled to endure, when unescapably cooped up with a collection of other people in the confined space of a ship. How violent the hatreds, and the loves ; how prejudices flourish ; how barriers break down. It is life squeezed out of shape ; all that takes months to do on land may take place here, compressed into the small space of a week or a fortnight. Instead of a hundred other distractions to keep you from pursuing any one acquaintance directly to its end, there is nothing whatever to stop its movement on board ship. On this sea voyage in question, an embittered and disappointed man, determined to ruin himself by drink if he can, sets out with a couple of missionaries, a boxer, a vivid vulgar woman, and two who are rich and elegant. The embittered doctor is vilely rude to everyone he meets, and soon therefore has two of the women in love with him. The ardent young missionary (male) develops a passion for the vulgar woman, and the other passengers fraternise alternately as the voyage goes on. Finally, however, they are all landed in the Grand Canary island, and there their attachments receive a more vigorous testing. Fever has broken out there ; but by an error of judgment on the part of their Captain they are allowed to land. They are swiftly involved in the trouble. The doctor enrolls himself, with the missionaries, to help combat the epidemic, and before long he finds the girl he has begun to love, on the ship, ill on his hands. He saves her life ; but as she has a husband in England whom she does not love, things are still complicated. However, the doctor has been reinspired with energy, and an interest in life returns to him. This is the bald outline of the story. And one would say, Mr. Cronin, with all the force and fervour of his strong imagination to give it life and meaning, could make a thrilling story out of such material. But does he ? Has some conviction, some ardent dwelling in his own imagination, been absent when he wrote this book ? For in spite of all his power of language, his creations, here, remain dummies. At the same time it would not be fair to suggest that this is not a book to enjoy. It is amusing and interesting throughout ; and, of course, filled with felicitous phrases and pure prose passages of arresting beauty.

"Tom's a-cold" is a quotation from *King Lear*, and it seems to imply that the world has gone to ruin, as did the mad king's world. At least Mr. Collier's novel is all about a world that is in ruins. It will remind many readers of a novel by Mr. Shanks called *The People of The Ruins*, which came out some ten years ago. In Mr. Shank's novel, as in Mr. Collier's, a picture of England is presented to us as it might be if devastation took place which reduced civilisation out of existence. Such inhabitants as are left in the land live in the ruins of towns and villages without a vestige of the so-called amenities of civilisation ; machinery is not ; there are no industries whatsoever ; even the use of gunpowder has been forgotten, tribe wars against tribe with bow and arrow. How, in less than a hundred years, mankind could

lose so much is difficult to imagine ; but, being asked to believe it, we do so, and are willing to proceed with the entertainment. Unfortunately, Mr. Collier gives us less of an entertainment than we expect from him, after the tremendous entertainment of *His Monkey Wife*. The idea of the plot is amusing enough. An isolated group, or clan, of these peasant warriors living in a fortified valley, find themselves without enough women in their community. They decide to make a raid upon a neighbouring tribe—following a well-known, historical precedent. The raid is duly accomplished and the hero of the tale gets the girl he had planned to get ; having fallen in love with her, at sight, when on an exploratory expedition before this. The girl, “ Rose,” and “ Harry ” get on very nicely together till a member of the clan makes the mistake of shooting the girl’s brother and appearing at a meal in his clothes. As she had loved her brother more than any other man, her cup is poisoned for her now. She plans escape, and vengeance. Succeeds ; and brings her whole clan down upon her captors. There is an exciting battle . . . but I must not reveal any more. The business of all this is very cleverly worked out ; but far too much space is taken up with the dialogue and conversations of these incredible people. Unless what people say is set out in order to gain insight into their characters, or in order to give dramatic point to their actions, or because it is intrinsically amusing, it is of little interest and becomes speedily boring. (Mr. Collier’s Ape, who could not talk at all, had a far more holding personality than any of these uncouth creatures who talk incessantly.) The truth is, of course, that it is what people are that matters ; and when they talk, in a book, we enjoy what they say in proportion to the amount of illumination of character in their remarks. Yet Mr. Collier can make such brilliantly illuminating observations himself that it is a pity he did not give us more of himself and less of his creatures. Of Harry he says :

His chest was like a barrel, and his neck like that of a bull. He had that sort of figure which has been thickened by heavy labour from early childhood : he was broad out of all proportion to his height, but in spite of that his movements were so active, and his strength behind them so flamboyantly obvious, that he was a pleasure to the eye. *He had, too, this air that between sentences he looked into the invisible eyes of his sole-equal, God or Fate, and his attention extricated itself with an effort from this brooding gaze, and, by the reluctance of its coming, dwarfed the matter in hand.*

How excellent are the lines I have italicised. And, again, of the “ Father ” of the tribe, he writes :

His was a bitter, subtle look, like that of a man enslaved, who thinks but dares not act, and sees his harvest wasted and his plans brought to nothing.

Such enlightening remarks drive the reader forward ; but they are both from the first seven pages, after that they cease.

Mr. Boden wrote an exceedingly alive and illuminating account of a miner’s life, a year ago, which brought him fame. His second effort to follow up this success is not likely to bring him so much encouragement. It is, in fact, nothing like so good a book. Where *Miner* was a simple, straightforward narrative of fact, *Flo* is a novel of passion and melodrama. To write of this requires very different gifts from those Mr. Boden possesses. Short stories should be more in his line: stories of the facts he knows, truthfully set down.

J. E. S. ARROWSMITH

FICTION—II

MY SISTER MY BRIDE. By CYRIL HUME. Heinemann. 8s. 6d.

HELENA. By SYLVIA THOMPSON. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

MARTIN'S SUMMER. By VICKI BAUM. Translated by BASIL CREIGHTON. Geoffrey Bles. 7s. 6d.

QUINTET. By ESTHER MEYNELL. Chapman & Hall. 8s. 6d.

HARDY PERENNIAL. By HELEN HULL. Cobden-Sanderson. 7s. 6d.

AFTER THE PARTY. By R. D. DORTHY. Secker. 6s.

THE LITTLE DOCTOR. By FRANK G. LAYTON. William Blackwood & Sons. 7s. 6d.

THE CITY WITHOUT A HEART. ANONYMOUS. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

THE LAUGHING PHILOSOPHER. DION CLAYTON CALTHROP. Chapman & Hall. 7s. 6d.

THE idea of a young girl who has escaped the perils and missed the advantages of a conventional up-bringing has a strong appeal for novelists. Mr. Hume, Miss Thompson and Miss Baum have each attempted such a character in their books mentioned above. Mr. Hume is the most successful ; but Miss Baum is very good at it, although her's is a comparatively minor character.

My Sister My Bride, which is, I believe, about the fifth of Mr. Hume's novels, has the fine proportion and the distinction of a book written with more than the desire for sales. The promise displayed in *Cruel Fellowship* and *Wife of the Centaur* is maturing. The plot of this book in bare outline is not remarkable : a middle-aged artist falls in love with the young girl, his neighbour, when she is sixteen, and his own son is just out of college. Eventually the son enters into the picture—and the end is tragic. But this gives no idea of the rich development of the theme and the individuality of the characters ; and no hint of the writer's sympathetic insight and the saving grace of his humour. If the satyr-like qualities of Lawrence, the man, are slightly exaggerated, it is done deliberately and serves the author's purpose admirably. With rare skill, he has avoided the obvious pitfall of sentimentality in portraying the girl. She is tremendously alive and real, for all the remarkable qualities of her gifts and the unusual circumstances of her life. Lawrence meets Nancy in the garden ; and when he asks her to dine at his house, the conversation is both natural and amusing :

" . . . From infancy," she said proudly, but rather as though she were reading out of the *American Magazine*, " I was cradled in a prop trunk ! " Then she waited eagerly for him to say something.

He exclaimed dutifully, " And now you can't wait to get back to it again."

" Oh, yes ! " she said. " I'm very impatient, but I can wait."

He decided that it was more or less like trying to have a conversation with one of Alice in Wonderland's animals. After a few moments he tried again.

" What do you do over there all day ? "

" At my house ? Well—usually I read and I think and I write in my diary."

" It sounds like a vicious circle," he said.

" You're in it ! " she said. " Already ! "

" Oh, my God ! " he said. " Do you leave it around ? "

" Don't be dismayed," she said. " There's nothing but beautiful things in it about you ! "

and then later :

“ Have some potatoes, Nancy.”

“ Thanks ! Yes, I will. I love potatoes. These look like lovely potatoes ! ”

She took a lot of potatoes.

Soon after that :

. . . came in with the desert, and it was no use trying to get Nancy's attention for a while. She ate two dishes of strawberry ice-cream and several pieces of sponge cake, and then she did not seem to be hungry any more.

Of course there is nothing very wonderful in these bits I have quoted, but they show how, with unhurried sureness, the appealing character of Nancy is developed. Later the book is dramatic and tragic enough, and these things are heightened all the more by Mr. Hume's considered approach to them.

The relations between the father and son in the latter part of the book are not too convincing. In fact the son is never quite so real as Lawrence and Nancy ; but when a writer has given us Nancy, we must not ask too much ; and when he has written a book with so much insight and so many memorable passages in it, it would be ungrateful to complain of little faults. *My Sister My Bride* cannot be reviewed adequately in a small space. Much which should be said about it is, of necessity, omitted here.

In *Helena*, Miss Thompson also takes a middle-aged artist and a young girl ; but in this case the girl is the artist's daughter. Revolting against his own world, he leaves his family (a family which would be revolting to anyone), taking the four-year old Helena to Italy with him, to rear her in freedom, intellectual and otherwise. When she is barely grown, he dies, and Helena is returned to the reluctant bosom of the horrid family. They protest mightily against her lack of conforming to accepted standards, but it is difficult to see from the evidence set forth that her unconventional upbringing made her very different from a good many other girls. Miss Thompson says she is different, but one doesn't believe it, or, indeed, care very much about it one way or the other. Helena is a very ordinary girl, after all.

On the other hand, Miss Vicki Baum, in a book far from her best, creates a delightful young girl who is the daughter of an actress and a scholar, who has been allowed to grow untrammelled by the usual processes. Unfortunately we do not see her very often in the pages of *Martin's Summer*. Perhaps she strayed in accidentally. Certainly it would have been a better book if it had been written about her instead of about Martin.

Mrs. Meynell's book reminds me of Kew on a still day in October, when a thin blue mist gives a somnambulistic quality to the beech trees and the waters. Although complete in itself, *Quintet* is a continuation of her *Grave Fairy Tale*. Beethoven and Liszt are the models for two of her characters ; but not confined too closely to the facts of their lives, the book pursues its long and leisurely way, always to the accompaniment of music coming faintly from the distance.

Hardy Perennial is one of the best novels Miss Hull has written, and she is to be counted on for good sound writing, always interesting, sometimes brilliant. This is the story of a family in New York to-day, living in the present changed conditions—and a little more than that, for the husband is almost a caricature of a good many men. It is a little hard to believe that so much egotism and petty selfishness and blind vanity could be concentrated in one person, but all the same his behaviour is often remarkably life-like. His wife is wise and not a ' worm.' Their children offer the problems to be found in many homes in every country to-day, and in handling the relations of the wife to the husband and of both of them to the children, Miss Hull is particularly skilful.

Even after reading *After the Party* with considerable enjoyment, I do not know quite what it is about. Certainly the book doesn't seem to me to be at all what the publishers say it is on the cover-jacket, although I agree that it covers a period of several years and is chiefly the story of two brothers. Where Mr. Hume's book is distinguished by its proportion of length for subject matter, Mr. Dorthy's is hurried to the point of confusion. In the first few pages characters are hurled indiscriminately at the reader, causing a bewilderment from which he may not recover. Yet, in spite of this, *After the Party* is good in spots, often making one pause to think :

He looked at her again, and, as happens sometimes between two people who love each other, he saw her differently, saw something of the unyieldingness, the sharpness of edge which, in her as in so many people, was character ; felt something, too, of the antagonism which might arise between them, different as they were. And because he saw this, felt this, he was for a moment no longer in love with her. But only for a moment. Ann's face, as she looked at him, softened, and something in him answered her. What was the revelation of a moment ago ? He explained it away, brushing it aside as one brushes aside a momentary irritation.

Last month I reviewed *The Wooden Doctor*, by Margiad Evans, published by Basil Blackwell. About the time of writing, I was reading *The Little Doctor*, by Frank G. Layton, published by Messrs. William Blackwood and Sons. The various doctors and the publishers beginning with B proved too much for me, and I attributed Miss Evans book to ' Basil Blackwood.'

The Little Doctor is a vivid presentation of the life of a panel doctor in the poorest district of a manufacturing town in the North of England. The book is done almost entirely in dialogue, which proves irritating at times, because the writer evidently feels so strongly about his subject that he leads his characters too far toward haranguing each other. But for all that, it is worth reading. Most of us know very little about panel doctors and their patients, and this book is illuminating.

It can scarcely be said that most of us know very little about Hollywood. One would have to be deaf, dumb and blind or live on a desert island to avoid hearing quite a lot about it. But it can at least be said of *The City Without a Heart* that it presents Hollywood from a somewhat new angle, approached via the Cornish cliffs, where the heroine is discovered. It is swift moving and appears to be the work of some practised writer in his lighter moments.

Mr. Calthrop's *The Laughing Philosopher* might be called Pierrot in modern dress—an allegory as light and delicious as a perfectly cooked soufflé. A cheese soufflé, I think, with the nourishment of wisdom beaten lightly with the froth of its wit. " I must carry my joy like a cloak," says this Pierrot ; and he does, up and down the roads of France, with his cat Charlemagne. But he marries Pierrette and becomes a salesman of paint, full of brilliant ideas for obtaining great wealth, eager, always to carry them out—to-morrow. This, not the book for everyone, is noteworthy because of the writer's sure and delicate touch. What a pity the title is so ordinary.

HELEN MORAN

BELLES-LETTRES—I

TRIAL BY VIRGINS. Fragment of a Biography. By DAVID LARG. Davies. 10s. 6d.

THE INNOCENT EYE. By HERBERT READ. Faber. 6s.

OPIUM. The Diary of an Addict. By JEAN COCTEAU. Allen & Unwin. 5s.

THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES. By DOROTHY MARGARET STUART. Harrap. 7s. 6d.

ELIZABETHAN LOVE CONVENTIONS. By LU EMILY PEARSON. University of California Press ; Cambridge University Press. 27s. 6d.

THERE is that in the writing of Mr. Larg which makes him noticeable. His book on Ruskin caused one to turn round after he had passed ; and with this study of Rossetti he hoists himself effortlessly into the company of serious writers. Yet *Trial by Virgins* is not without its faults ; its pretentious title goes out of the way to seem charged with obscure meaning. The sub-title again, hints that there is to be more to come. But more of what ? For here is the progress of two souls, and from his point of view Mr. Larg has said all that there is to say on the matter. This is not outwardly a biography. It is not an almanack of dates or a record of an artist's triumphs. It is the spiritual study of tormented genius, and all the more interesting in that it comes after two of last year's books upon the same theme, Miss Violet Hunt's *The Wife of Rossetti*, and Mr. Francis Bickley's *Pre-Raphaelite Comedy* ; and, far from being, in consequence, a disappointment or a bore it proceeds, from sheer excellence of writing and originality of thought to recultivate that, by this time rather sterile soil.

Actually the book deals with Rossetti's childhood, growth, maturing and decay. It gives minute attention to the years of union with Elizabeth Siddall (curious and morbid anticipations of another great poet) ; and, of course, Mr. Ruskin acts as conductor to the performance of the two stars while the rest of the P.R.B. chime in with appropriate orchestral effects.

The Rossetti family, three parts Italian and one part English, are understood by Mr. Larg and modelled by him with assurance. He is able to sum up an inner situation by an admirable usage of epigram, as when, of Rossetti's gentle and steady younger brother he remarks, "William came on Dante Gabriel's cast-off thoughts and cherished them." His attitude to Christina, however, is on the whole unfriendly. He recognises not the poet ; he only indicates, and that from a safe distance, the puritan sitting at home and, with her mother, disapproving of many things ; in particular of the lean and shadowy Damozel whose tortured relations with Dante Gabriel are well described :

They could not get away from each other. And they could only endure each other intermittently, on occasion ; when Elizabeth had taken her chloral, wiped off the stains of life and looked as if she were dead. When she lay in the armchair her ambition was achieved. The stillness of all her gestures was resolved into a peace that was no longer hers but belonged to the man who saw her . . . In a healthy woman her attitude would have been coquetry : in her it was a desire to prepare herself for the worship to which she was entitled.

In the end she achieved her object, and it was done in her especial way. She took an overdose. And Rossetti, who had so often let her down during her life, was at last loyal to her in her death, when, in her coffin, against her hair he placed his book of poems.

Mr. Larg adopts a curious attitude with regard to these poems. He insists that just because the book contained lines written to another woman this gesture was made possible. He even hints that the existence of the book itself was entirely owing to this other woman. Rossetti had a queer character. It was in some respects not unlike Byron's. There was powerful, flashing genius, some vulgarity, and in his relations with women, a pitiful exhibition of the cad turned bully through cowardice. Mr. Larg pays more attention to the painter than the poet, although, on the whole his book concerns the artist's character more than his achievement.

The experience of a childhood spent on a remote farm in a lonely Yorkshire vale has not been vouchsafed to many people. It has, however, been the lot of Mr. Herbert Read, and in *The Innocent Eye* he has done that, which, after all is a very natural thing. He has placed on paper the flying shadows of recollection. This is a very simple and unaffected book ; it strains after nothing so much as the truth. The effort to recapture the wonder of those first intimations to childhood is difficult ; for they illuminate the memory but are unattainable, as a reflected object is a delusion. The pinnacle of this emotion has been twice nearly reached—by Vaughan and by Wordsworth, and they had the advantage of poetry to interpret their feelings. Mr. Read too is a poet, but he is seen in a better perspective in the medium of prose than if he also had planned this recreation of impressions in verse. He writes naturally and with the consciousness of what he is doing. We all of us can remember waking up in the early morning, the sunlight streaming into a country bedroom ; trees outside, and perhaps the comfortable sound of cows being jostled along to pasture. Visionary Traherne saw the corn waving in the fields as "orient and immortal wheat, which never should be reaped nor was ever sown," Mr. Read too, thinks it incumbent on him, here and there to express himself profoundly. But in this he is less successful. He becomes entangled in a hotch-potch of fake expressions such as the following lines:

The echoes of my life which I find in my early childhood are too many to be dismissed as vain coincidences; but it is perhaps my conscious life which is the echo, the only real experiences in life being those lived with a virgin sensibility—so that we only hear a tone once, see, hear, touch, taste and smell everything but once, the first time. All our life is an echo of our first sensations, and we build up our consciousness our whole mental life, by variations and combinations of these elementary sensations.

All this does not really mean much. Far more interpretive of the past are the simple associations of childhood. The smell of the saddle room, the atmosphere of the cowshed :

Morning and night, and most often by lanthorn light (perhaps it is only the Winter scene which is impressed on my memory) the cows were milked in a glow and atmosphere which is for me the glow and atmosphere of the Nativity.

This book is to be recommended to all who love, not only the country, but the impressions which were made on their infant consciousness so long ago and in a time that seems far from the present.

"That strange modern genius," as the jacket of his book describes M. Jean Cocteau, proves once again that strange modern geniuses have first to exist in a peculiar manner before having a right to the title. However, we are not going to gibe at M. Cocteau for being strange or modern, we are only going to question his being a genius. If he is not that he is undoubtedly brilliant and anyone interested in his latest book would do well to read it straight away in French rather than in this awkward and heavy translation. On page 48 I found the following line :

The typical sin against the spirit, is it not being spiritual ?

The last word of the sentence having been lifted from *spirituel*. Readers may judge for themselves whether or no this is a translation of any value whatever.

The book itself is a pastiche of ideas, epigrams, conclusions and impressions. They were written during the time when the author was in a clinic recovering from the effects of opium smoking. His mind was, therefore, in a peculiarly relaxed condition. He stands up for the drug, separating it from all other drugs as gold lies apart from all other metals. "Opium frees the mind. It never makes one witty. It expands the mind ; it does not sharpen it." Elsewhere I find :

Everything that we do in life, including love, is done in an express train travelling towards death. To smoke opium is to leave the train while in motion ; it is to be interested in something other than life and death.

Comparison with De Quincey seems almost unavoidable, and it is to the detriment of M. Cocteau, who emerges from the test clever, witty, cynical and superficial. M. Cocteau disclaims any connexion with the Surrealists ; he is at least grounded in instinctive classicism, but that does not prevent him from indulging in a positive orgy of morbid line drawings which illustrate this remarkable publication. The other illustrations, geometrical designs which take on the character of greek tragic figures, are extremely good.

Next to this product of the last word in sophistication comes a book which tells the story of the little girl through history. It begins with Babylonia and Ancient Egypt and takes her to the nineteenth century. Miss Stuart has already done a similar history of the Boy and this will come as a companion volume. For its purpose it is useful and pleasantly written, with great care and good planning. It should be extremely popular in the schoolroom, but it necessarily skims the surface, dealing chiefly with the employments and environments of the girl through the ages and is not in any sense a particular, or social history.

The little girl seems to have been more highly thought of in Babylonia than in ancient Egypt where "she had not the same legal and social status." In Greece her existence was dull and pleasant on the whole, although at no time attaining such importance as it did in Rome, under the Empire. During the Dark Ages her life was monotonous when not fraught with danger and the terrors of invasions, while in the Middle Ages she was encouraged in learning and philosophy, and so on. Some day there must be a large and important work of this description. One volume to each period instead of a chapter. Perhaps Miss Stuart will undertake it, and we should have a valuable work of reference by an authority on the subject.

It is quite impossible here to give a satisfactory appreciation of Mrs. Pearson's book on the development of the love motive in Elizabethan poetry. It really requires an article to itself. It is extremely learned, but the author has that grace with which she appears to wear her learning lightly, and I should say that that *Elizabethan Love Conventions* will prove very valuable to students, not only of the Shakespearean sonnet but also to those who are studying the early influences of Italian literature in England.

YVONNE FFRENCH

BELLES-LETTRES—II

ON READING SHAKESPEARE. By LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH. Constable. 7s. 6d.

MYTHOLOGY AND THE RENAISSANCE TRADITION IN ENGLISH POETRY. By DOUGLAS BUSH. University of Minnesota Press. \$4.00.

A POETICAL RHAPSODY. Vol. II. Edited by H. E. ROLLINS. Harvard University Press. \$4.00.

THE WORKS OF EDMUND SPENSER. Vol. I. Edited by E. GREENLAW, C. G. OSGOOD and F. M. PADEFORD. The Johns Hopkins Press.

MR. PEARSALL SMITH is known to scholars for his *Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton*, a fine achievement in scholarship which reveals an intimate knowledge of English history and English literature in the closing years of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries. He is known to those interested in the English language for his *Words and Idioms* and kindred studies, and he is familiar to a wider circle of readers through the several series of *Trivia*, collections of sentences, aphorisms, sketches, which reveal that he is an artist in language as well as an *amateur* of words. His anthologies from the works of Donne and of Jeremy Taylor further prove the depth of his interest in English prose, and confirm his special attachment to the seventeenth century.

All these characters—the scholar, the philologist, the student and writer of English prose—contribute to his latest book, *On Reading Shakespeare*. There is, however, no display of learning or of specialized study: the touch is light and the tone is conversational; we are simply invited to hear Mr. Pearsall Smith, who has spent no small part of his life in reading Shakespeare and reflecting on his work, telling us urbanely and at times amusedly how he has felt and what he has thought upon the subject.

Two kinds of readers may be disappointed with the book. First, those who find uncongenial the personality that it displays; those who disliked *Trivia* will probably not enjoy a book which is so very obviously the work of *Trivia's* author. That is the penalty of a markedly personal style: if it makes friends where the impersonal only attaches admirers it will rouse an enemy where the impersonal would merely animate a critic. On this point the reviewer can only speak for himself; in the present case to say that he feels, throughout the book, that he is being entertained by a suave, sagacious, cultured, and amusing critic, a critic of impeccable sensibility, who contrives as he moves about his library, from the desk to the bookshelf and from the bookshelf to the armchair, to keep his cigar miraculously alight and his face turned towards his interlocutor, so that he shall not for a moment miss the least inflection in the voice of his host or the occasional twinkle in his eye.

Even those who delight in the converse of so distinguished and so human a writer may, none the less, remain dissatisfied. They may ask for what Mr. Pearsall Smith has not undertaken to give them: a treatise on Shakespeare's plays in their every aspect; they may complain that they find no statement of Shakespeare's relations to the other dramatists of his day, no discussion of his "stage-craft" or of the adaptability of his drama to modern theatrical presentation, no deep inquiry into the chronology of his works or the development of his genius, and finally no excursions into aesthetic theory, no explanation of Shakespeare's greatness—only the statement of a mystery. To such complaints it is only necessary to answer that you cannot have

everything, and that they ask for what this book does not (and why should it ?) set out to give. For *On Reading Shakespeare* is, first and foremost, a personal appreciation ; if it is also both informative and instructive, that is a matter for gratitude and not a ground for complaint that it is not more so.

For Mr. Pearsall Smith, Shakespeare is pre-eminently a poet. In the second place, he is a creator of character. It is for his achievements in these fields, and not as a dramatist, that Mr. Pearsall Smith mainly admires and undertakes to praise him. He is not, therefore, much interested (at any rate for the purposes of this book) in Shakespeare's stage-craft, or in the theatrical conditions of Shakespeare's day. Still less does he think of him as the writer of plays for production at the present time : " Shakespeare's tragedies " he says, " are dreadful, but no tragedy can equal the tragedy of seeing one of them performed." Many of his pages are spent in occasionally mischievous flings at Professor Stoll, who insists that to appreciate Shakespeare it is necessary to be familiar with the dramatic traditions of his day, and that knowledge of those traditions will show us that those inconsistencies in the behaviour of his characters which have provided some of the great enigmas of Shakespearean criticism are due simply to the fact that Shakespeare, true to a ruling convention, did not create characters at all—he simply wrote parts for actors. A good deal of the fun poked at Professor Stoll, like the author's fun at the expense of persons who better deserve it, is sensible and salutary. But it may be questioned whether Professor Stoll can be quite so easily disposed of. Mr. Pearsall Smith's very commendable aim is to enjoy Shakespeare himself,—not what is read into him by twentieth century actors or producers, nor what he had in common with other sixteenth century playwrights. Why, he asks, has Shakespeare survived for the whole world, when his contemporaries have disappeared for all but a few curious investigators ? By virtue, he answers, of that " individuality of utterance," that " personal characteristic voice " with which he endows each character, so as to give it an independent being of its own :

If then, unlike all the other dramatic writers of the world, Shakespeare could make his old ghosts sing, and each of them sing in a voice that is his alone, what can matter to us the irrelevant, theatrical, unmotivated, melodramatic things which they are compelled by the plots in which they appear to do ?

The answer is that the more we know about Shakespeare the nearer we are to him, and that a knowledge of the conditions in which he wrote must throw light upon his mind and thence on his creations. It is true that the light may mislead the ill-judging, and that, spoiling the vision of those who look too closely, it may turn critics into pedants ; but it is a light that must not be rejected by those who wish to know Shakespeare as he really was. So much, indeed, Mr. Pearsall Smith admits : " a great part of Shakespeare," he says, " can best be understood by the study of the drama of that time." The same may be said of the minute study of contemporary language and topical allusion which Mr. Pearsall Smith brushes somewhat cavalierly aside in his quest for aesthetic delight. His answer no doubt would be that these things have their importance (indeed he is, as this book shows, exceedingly well versed in them himself), but that knowledge of them does not heighten the peculiar enjoyment which he seeks from Shakespeare and which can be found nowhere else.

A valuable part of the book is the list of works of reference and of criticism that is appended to it. Here and in his notes, though they are short and light in their touch, Mr. Pearsall Smith provides an excellent apparatus for Shakespearean study, so full and so judiciously introduced that the book might well have been given *How to Read Shakespeare* for its title.

Professor Bush, in *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition*, has written a learned and amusing book, though not one which will appeal to very many readers. His subject is classical mythology, its treatment by English poets from the earliest times till the end of the seventeenth century, and the sources in which English writers found their myths. It would be easy for a writer on the subject to lose his sense of proportion and of reality and write a great deal about the importance of "influences," which do not exist, to lose himself in a sea of unrelated facts and try to get his bearings by inventing imaginary similarities, traditions, and points of contact. Professor Bush does none of these things. His knowledge of the English poetry of his period clearly is minute, and his familiarity with mediaeval poetry and romance remarkable. Only an expert could do justice to the fullness with which he treats of the mediaeval versions of Ovid, and the romanticized Trojan epics in which the Elizabethans found the material for much of what they wrote. This, indeed, is the key topic of his book; "a history of mythology and the Renaissance tradition," as he says with characteristic wit, "must be largely an account of the metamorphoses of Ovid." Ovid in the hands of Christian allegorizers and later romanticizers is a dull topic, and the full detail in which Professor Bush treats of his influence on English verse might be tedious if he did not display throughout a sense of proportion, a wide knowledge of ancient and contemporary literature, as well as of that with which he is directly concerned, and a balanced and independent judgment. He never falls into the too common fault of overpraising work with which he is very familiar in order to atone for its dullness. He has no need to, for he has an interesting story to tell, even where he is dealing with the dullest writers: how classical mythology came to Renaissance writers through mediaeval allegorizers, how they made from it their own selection, and how they changed its character in the process, and how Spenser and Milton and contemporary writers were affected by the pseudo-classical world to which, in a large measure, they looked both for a model and for a source of inspiration.

The next two books—Professor Hyder Rollins' notes to his edition of Davison's *Poetical Rhapsody*, and the variorum Spenser from Johns Hopkins—are most favourable examples of American scholarship. The former provides a very full index of words, subjects, and names found in the text; notes on the text; and an introduction in which the history of the volume and a discussion of the authorship of the pieces that it contains, with especial reference to the mysterious initials A.W., which (as is well known) are attached to most of the pieces in the book. It is enough to say that this volume is indispensable to serious students of late Elizabethan verse. The latter is the first volume of what promises to be a monumental edition of Spenser with notes *variorum*. The book is a large quarto, containing first a well printed text of the first book of the *Faerie Queen*, without any textual or other notes, then 150 pages of Commentary, selected from Warton and Spenserian editors and scholars down to the present day, with additions by the editor; then full appendices, similarly drawn from a wide range of writers on Spenser, on the plan of Spenser's poem, his sources, the nature of his allegory, and kindred subjects. Finally there is a full discussion of the authorities for the text and a detailed list of variant readings. If any criticism may be passed by one who is not an expert, on such a thorough piece of scholarship it is to suggest that a few of the modern criticisms on the aesthetic quality of certain passages are a little outside the scope of the commentary, and might perhaps have given place to notes of earlier, or of the present, editors.

JOHN SPARROW

LITERARY HISTORY & CRITICISM

CHARLES LAMB AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES. By EDMUND BLUNDEN. Cambridge University Press. 7s. 6d.

IMMORTALS AT FIRST HAND. By CECIL HARMSWORTH. Desmond Harmsworth. 12s. 6d.

LORENZO IN TAOS. By MABEL DODGE LUHAN. Secker. 10s. 6d.

THE EDUCATION OF SHAKESPEARE. By GEORGE A. PLIMPTON. Humphrey Milford. 7s. 6d.

SIDNEY LANIER. By AUBREY HARRISON STARKE. Humphrey Milford. 30s.

FEW men have been happier in their friends and critics than Charles Lamb, and with rare exceptions, notably the disgruntled judgment of Carlyle, there has been nothing but a chorus of praise for the man and for his work since the time when people began to write about him. An interesting feature of this continuous acclamation is that there is nothing colourless or stereotyped about it. Each new eulogist seems to find something fresh and attractive to reveal about a personality which still retains its magnetic powers of attraction so many years after Charles Lamb's death.

Mr. Edmund Blunden is a noteworthy addition to the company of good writers and critics who have written appreciations about the greatest appreciator of them all, and in the preface to his *Charles Lamb and His Contemporaries* he explains the reason for his book, of which he delivered the substance as the Clark Lectures for 1932 in Cambridge. After paying a tribute to the excellence of the work done by Mr. E. V. Lucas as Lamb's editor and biographer Mr. Blunden continues :

His [Mr. Lucas's] work is beyond praise ; and it is only the fact that there are in the course of time shiftings of idea, and various possibilities of treatment, and—even after his wonderfully vigilant enquiries—discoveries of letters, documents, writings to be made, that allows me to think of any experiment in Elian biography by me or anybody, such short reviews as the present excepted.

The seven chapters deal with Lamb's childhood, his work as a poet, his relations and collaboration with Mary, his criticisms, his friendships, and the essays. I found Mr. Blunden's theories about Lamb's possibilities as a poet to be at least as interesting as anything else in a very good and beautifully written book, although they are likely to provoke discussion and even argument. Enumerating some of the poetical influences of Lamb's youth Mr. Blunden pays a notable tribute to the writings of Bowles as they must have appeared to such eager aspirants as Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey and Lamb. After quoting "The Bells, Ostend," which is probably the best known of Bowles's sonnets, Mr. Blunden writes :

What have we here ? As yet, Tennyson was not, and the song of 'Tears, idle tears' was far in the future : meanwhile, Bowles discovered the theme of a solitary and nervous grief, awakened by an incidental experience of the utmost simplicity. He hymned a tender, sub-conscious unity between the observer and the observed ; the topic was taken not because it might illustrate habits of mankind but because to one man it was important, to the point of 'magic'. As yet, such words as 'magic,' 'melancholy,' 'chime' had not been sicklied over by insensitive uses. The first had not become an advertising counter, the second was not associated with boarding-houses or bank-balances, the third was still an open-air music. And throughout this typical Sonnet, the clear touch upon a restricted vocabulary was, and is, noteworthy.

This passage is typical of the illuminating criticisms and judgments that Mr. Blunden gives in the course of his two hundred and fifteen pages, and for them alone the book would be worth reading. But it has numerous other admirable qualities. Mr. Blunden

has contrived to quote freshly from little-known material. He is peculiarly well fitted to write sympathetically about Lamb as a man and as an artist, and the reader of *Charles Lamb And His Contemporaries* is likely to turn once more to the writings of Charles and Mary Lamb with a renewed vigour of appreciation, which will intensify the enjoyment that is to be got from them.

The object of Mr. Cecil Harmsworth in compiling *Immortals At First Hand* was to bring together contemporary personal descriptions of some of the more famous figures in English literature and history, although he has modified slightly his original design of including only descriptions done by eye-witnesses. Mr. Harmsworth regrets the paucity of material available for dealing with Shakespeare and his contemporaries, among whom he mentions Ben Jonson. Surely Mr. Harmsworth might have drawn upon Drummond of Hawthornden's *Conversations* for this purpose?

This pleasant, unambitious anthology does not demand serious criticism, and it has been selected with a kindliness and charity that make it agreeable to read. Mr. Harmsworth has tried his hand at some contemporary portraits, and these are not at all unworthy of their place among a distinguished company. The beginning of the account of Arthur James Balfour is a fair example of Mr. Harmsworth's method:

A man of extraordinary charm of appearance, of manner and of voice. His head was the finest in its suggestion of intellect that I have ever seen, and it is a pity that it has never been adequately represented in art. Nor is there, I suppose, any adequate record of his voice which, revealed, as he spoke, new beauties in the tones and cadences of the English language.

Yet there was something curiously lacking in this fascinating personality. Charm and polish and urbanity were his in the highest degree and a fastidious delicacy of mind and manner that extended to the tips of his tapering fingers (the fingers of a musician); but was there any warmth of blood behind it all? Or was he all cold intellect? Certainly, he rarely succeeded in winning the affection of his political and official colleagues.

I hope that Mr. Harmsworth will extend his activities, as he seems to be capable of the requisite amount of detachment when he contemplates and depicts his subjects. Some of the descriptions by other writers which he quotes are so short that *Immortals At First Hand* suffers a little from scrappiness.

From Mr. Harmsworth's quiet and formal garden it was a sudden and violent transition to the hubbub and hurly-burly of Mrs. Mabel Dodge Luhan's extraordinary account of her friendship with D. H. Lawrence in New Mexico, *Lorenzo In Taos*. This is a book which contrives to be grim and ridiculous, farcical and terrifying at the same time, and it is written in an odd compound of modernist jargon and good conversational and descriptive prose. Mrs. Luhan is obviously a remarkable woman. She read *Sea and Sardinia* and immediately wrote to Lawrence asking him to come to Taos. It took her a year to get him there, during which she bombarded him with letters on his travels and received from him some lively correspondence in return, including the best account of the interior of Ceylon that I have ever read:

No, the East doesn't get me at all. It boneless suavity, and the thick, choky feel of tropical forest, and the metallic sense of palms and the horrid noises of the birds and creatures, who hammer and clang and rattle and cackle and explode all the livelong day, and run little machines all the livelong night; and the scents that make me feel sick, the perpetual nauseous over-tone of cocoanut and cocoanut fibre and oil, the sort of tropical sweetness which to me suggests an undertang of blood, hot blood, and thin sweat: the undertaste of blood and sweat in the nauseous tropical fruits; the nasty faces and yellow robes of the Buddhist monks, the little vulgar dens of the temples: all this makes up Ceylon to me, and all this I cannot bear.

It was hardly reassuring for Mrs. Luhan when Lawrence compared her sitting room to

a nasty little Ceylon temple, at their first meeting, but her purpose was so insistent that she almost achieved her object, and she probably got to know him as well as any woman ever did. She certainly deserved her success. For a whole year she had willed him to come. In her own curious words :

Before I went to sleep at night, I drew myself all in to the core of my being where there is a live, plangent force lying passive—waiting for direction. Becoming entirely that, moving with it, speaking with it, I leaped through space, joining myself to the central core of Lawrence, where he was in India, in Australia.

This intensive persuasion had its effect, and, with the arrival of Lawrence and his wife there began the tragic pantomime which is so faithfully recorded in these pages. Lawrence seems to have embodied the most remarkable contrasts of human behaviour. He could be preposterously rude and surpassingly gentle in his personal contacts, and he had the supremely unattractive habit of talking unkindly, without any provocation, about those who tried to help him. The literature that is growing up about him seems to me to reveal an extraordinary man, hyper-sensitive and humourless, possessing a child's sense of fun and other less happy childish characteristics. As a writer his gifts of delicate and vivid observation are patent, but he had a perpetual and most regrettable tendency to show off, and he was for ever thinking of opportunities to shock. Mrs. Luhan proves herself to be an apt disciple, and many of Lawrences' peculiarities of style and thought, and also of bad taste, are to be found in this strange history of *Lorenzo In Taos*.

Mr. George Plimpton's modest little book on *The Education of Shakespeare* is well illustrated from the schoolbooks in use in his time, of which Mr. Plimpton has a unique collection. *The Education of Shakespeare* is very well produced, and is a sensible and well-planned book, presenting a great deal of information in an attractive form.

Sidney Lanier touched life at so many different points when he lived that it is not surprising to find that Mr. Aubrey Harrison Starke has thought it worth his while to write a biographical and critical study of 525 pages about him, forty-two years after his death. They do these things very thoroughly in America, and Mr. Starke may be congratulated on his labours, which are, as far as I can judge, both comprehensive and accurate, although I feel that a less pretentious book might have served the purpose equally well. Mr. Starke thinks that Lanier's verse has much in common with that of D. M. Dolben and Francis Thompson, and I think that there is some justice in the comparison, although the English reader may find that the American quality of Lanier's poetry is at first difficult to accept.

Born in 1842 in Georgia, Lanier was of mixed Huguenot, Scottish and Virginian descent. He fought in the Confederate army, wrote all manner of pot-boilers, including books for boys, and guide-books, in addition to his poems and critical works, and was a very fine flautist and musician. His life was adventurous and varied. He served in a blockade-runner, was confined for five months in a Federal prison, practised law, played as first flute at the Peabody concerts in Baltimore, and lectured on English literature in the Johns Hopkins University. He was a good letter writer.

Mr. Starke includes twelve poems that do not appear in the collected volume, and he has had access to many previously unpublished letters. The book contains thirty illustrations, and there are full bibliographies and an exhaustive index. Those who are interested in Lanier cannot do better than consult this book about him.

ERIC GILLET

BIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIRS

FREDERICK EDWIN EARL OF BIRKENHEAD : THE FIRST PHASE.

By THE EARL OF BIRKENHEAD, with a foreword by the RT. HON. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL. Thornton Butterworth. 21s.

THE LIFE OF JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN. By J. L. GARVIN. Vol. II. 1885-1895. Macmillan. 21s.

ONE-ARM SUTTON. By F. A. SUTTON. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

FULL MEASURE. By DE VALDA. Arthur Barker. 9s.

TO those of us who were already old enough in the early years of this century to read the *Times* Parliamentary Reports with intelligent appreciation, any mention of the career of the late Earl of Birkenhead immediately calls to mind that scene in the House of Commons on March 13, 1906, when a new member, young and not well known, rose from among the attenuated ranks of the Conservative Opposition to make his maiden speech. It was only a few weeks since Parliament had assembled after a dramatic General Election in which the Conservative Party had suffered the most disastrous defeat in its history. The House was full of strange faces ; it had undergone such a transformation as had never happened in English politics since the great Reform Bill—nor was anything like it to happen again until the recent General Election which put our present Government in power. And just as in 1931 any young man with vague political aspirations, who had labelled himself Conservative and gone forth thoughtlessly to contest some “ impregnable ” seat, was liable to find himself returned to Parliament with a comfortable majority, but with his hitherto comfortable income in sudden jeopardy ; so, in 1906, the crowded Liberal benches contained many unexpected, and not a few definitely embarrassed occupants.

As young F. E. Smith glanced over those jubilant ranks, which he presently intended to scarify, he may have noticed, for instance, his old Oxford opponent, Hilaire Belloc, who had led the Liberals in the Union : they had made a fine contrast in those days, the one a born orator, the other excelling in invective and swift retort. But this was not the Union, and no one understood that better than Smith. The House of Commons hated oratory, and he would give them none of it.

He had prepared his speech carefully. In its main structure it followed normal lines, shewing up the preposterous electioneering methods which his victorious opponents had used—religious prejudice, the people’s food, big loaves and little loaves, Chinese slavery, even “ slavery on the Welsh hills,” and so on—and warning them of the reaction in store. But at short intervals along this oratorical path he had laid ingenious little traps for interrupters—models of their kind, carefully oiled with the midnight oil. And now as he began to speak in that resonant yet rather monotonous voice of his, avoiding all gesture and moving not a muscle of his face, the Liberals tumbled headlong into every pitfall as they came to it. He spoke of the numbers of votes cast at the recent election, and there were cries from the other side of “ No, not true.” “ Do I gather that my figures are wrong ? ” asked Smith. Cries of “ Yes.” Smith sighed. “ They probably are,” he observed quietly, “ I took them from the Liberal Magazine.” Conservatives roared with delight, even the Liberals laughed, Balfour and Chamberlain beamed, Tim Healy passed an appreciative note. But never a smile from Smith, never a sign of the triumph that surged in his heart. At one stroke

he had stepped into the front rank of English politics. I can well remember reading that speech in the *Times* next morning and rejoicing in the rapier play. The peroration was its weakest point.

Here then is a full length portrait of this very individual and sharply defined figure in English public life. An eighteenth century type he has been called, and it is certain that the nineteenth would never have understood him. Both by instinct and upbringing he was a lawyer, and the best work he ever did was in the field of legal reform. He went into politics—or so it would seem to an outsider—to find a platform. He had no inborn instinct of statesmanship ; he simply liked talking to the House of Commons. He did not embrace the political career, as his Oxford contemporary, C. B. Fry embraced cricket, or as Belloc embraced literature, because he could not help it ; he turned to it as the best theatre for the exhibition of his gifts. That is not to say he was without principles. In the days of his early triumph in the House every Tory speaker was forced into a negative position. The defender of established things never got a chance of explaining them ; he was always busy picking holes in legislation designed to undermine them. A witty young Liberal in the Oxford Union, a few years later, described his Tory opponent as “ a kind of inverted Micawber, always waiting for something to turn down.” And the restless activity of the “ Progressives ” in the first decade of this century undoubtedly forced their opponents into a purely defensive attitude. It was an attitude precisely suited to F. E. Smith’s debating style. Yet it is fair to state that if he changed his opinions rather more often than is common among ordinary laymen, he was definitely more consistent than most professional politicians of his time. He never “ crossed the floor of the House.”

The author of this biography would not be “ F.E.’s ” son if he merely plastered his subject with praise. In fact, he is notably cool in his judgments. (I use the word “ cool ” advisedly, because he does not always seem to me to be fair—particularly in his summarised version of the Marconi scandal.) For instance, he admits that in that famous maiden speech, “ there was no attempt to produce a serious debating argument.” “ The speech consisted of a brilliant cluster of impertinencies about the manner in which the election was won and the records of different Liberals in that election ”—and no more. How far that method was intentional will never be known : it certainly put ginger into a disheartened opposition. That Smith always preferred attack to defence is not to say that he had no real belief in the strength of the city walls behind him.

Another inherited characteristic is the inability to write a dull or woolly phrase ; there have been few more readable biographies in recent years. The scene in the Commons on the occasion of the great maiden speech is admirably done ; and throughout the book the quotations from speeches—always a difficult matter to handle—are selected and apportioned with skill. Above all the impression is successfully conveyed—and it is of prime importance to the understanding of his character—that Lord Birkenhead was, as Mr. Churchill says in his foreword, “ always great fun.” It is not a bad epitaph.

Mr. Garvin has completed the second volume of his life of Joseph Chamberlain, the second act (as someone has put it) of this drama of modern political life ; and the figure of his subject begins at last to emerge as that of a man whom we all of us have known. Reviewing the first volume in these columns some months ago, I ventured to say that there were at least two Joseph Chamberlains. The first Chamberlain, the monocled Radical the Unitarian Sunday School teacher in a frock coat, the theoretical Republican, the bitter enemy of the Church of England and the brewers, has disappeared, or is undergoing a process of transformation before our eyes.

It is the vital moment of his career. Is Ireland, is the Empire, worth a Mass ? He decided as Henri IV had decided before him. The conclusion seems to be irresistible that the Irish question was at the root of the whole matter.

But we get something more than politics here. Chamberlain's passionate defence of his friend, Dilke, and some of his eager love-letters to the American girl whom he married as his third wife, give us another glimpse of that very lovable personality which so seldom showed itself in his public utterances. No one understands better than Mr. Garvin how to use biographical material of this kind. We like his man better as the book progresses. Politics apart, Chamberlain is becoming one of ourselves. And we feel a comfortable assurance that just as this volume exceeds the first, so will the third, dealing with the Tariff Reform controversy and the Boer War, exceed them both. There is an extraordinary strength and certainty in the manner in which this fine biography climbs towards its climax.

General Sutton boldly claims, through the mouth of his publishers, that this story of his astonishing career is " ninety-five per cent. true." The immediate effect of that disarming confession is to make us believe every word of it. And indeed the greater part is authenticated. He loses his arm in a hand-to-hand encounter with a Turk at Gallipoli ; he digs up gold in Siberia ; he fights for Kolchak, and has to run for his life ; he gets a glimpse of the Bolsheviks and does not like them ; he gives professional advice to a Chinese War Lord—and so on. In fact, a real adventurer. It is impossible to read his book without an envious thrill. The amazing gusto of it—the undiminished cheeriness, though he must fight with only one arm—should be an inspiration even to lounge lizards. I confess that I feel it impossible to criticize a book like this. It must be read to be appreciated.

And what can be said of the incomparable De Valda ? He went abroad at a tender age, visited New Zealand and South America, peeped over the wall of a young ladies' seminary, was thrown into prison on a charge of murder, learnt to drink whisky and grow cocoa (without drinking it), and eventually set up in business as an explorer of the more practical type in the pay of London business firms. That was a lucrative profession in the golden days before the War. Things are a little different now. Presumably we have to thank the slump for this entertaining book of reminiscences.

CLENNELL WILKINSON

THE CLASSICS

HESIOD. WORKS & DAYS. By J. A. SINCLAIR. Macmillan. 10s. 6d.

GREEK ASTRONOMY. By Sir THOMAS L. HEATH. Dent. 5s.

A HISTORY OF LATER GREEK LITERATURE. By F. A. WRIGHT. Routledge. 18s.

T. LIVII DE FRULOVISIIS. OPERA INEDITA. Edited by C. W. PREVITÉ-ORTON. Cambridge Press. 25s.

SENECA. LETTERS TO LUCILIUS. Translated by E. P. BARKER. 2 vols. Oxford. 12s. 6d.

GREEK CITIES. By PETER HUTTON. Dent. 10s. 6d.

INTRODUCTION TO GREEK HISTORY. By A. PETRIE. Oxford University Press. 3s. 6d.

THE GREEK MYTHOLOGY. By ALEXANDER DUTHIE. Oliver & Boyd. 4s. 6d.

MR. SINCLAIR'S edition of the *Works & Days* of Hesiod is very welcome, for Hesiod has been somewhat neglected of late years by scholars, if not by archaeologists, and increased knowledge of archaeology and language has made much of the work of earlier editors obsolete. It is impossible to do justice to Mr. Sinclair's work in a short review. Hesiod, especially in the *Works & Days*, makes more varied demands on his editor than almost any author; besides the usual knowledge of language and palaeography, he demands some knowledge of archaeology and anthropology, of astronomy, of agriculture, and so forth. It is sufficient praise to say that Mr. Sinclair meets these varied demands competently, and his edition will be valuable to scholars. His introductory essays are interesting and scholarly, and the same may be said of his notes. In the latter, however, he is rather sparing of assistance in regard to points of language, and such help is useful in the case of an author of whom there are no school editions available.

Sir Thomas Heath's *Greek Astronomy* consists of a short account in about fifty pages of the development of Greek theories on the subject from Homer onwards, followed by illustrative passages ranging in date from Thales to Plutarch. Technical criticism must be left to astronomers. All that a reviewer who is not an astronomer can say is that Sir Thomas Heath in his introduction is intelligible to the layman and in his translations is admirably clear and vigorous.

The surprising thing about Professor Wright is that his prodigious industry does not impair his zest. In his history of Later Greek Literature, which covers the nine centuries from the death of Alexander to that of Theodosius, his interest in the authors of whom he writes seldom flags, and thanks to it he holds the reader's interest, almost as completely as in his History of Later Latin Literature. If his success is not quite so complete, the fault is not in him, but in his subject. In spite of the high claims he makes for it—he reckons it among the five great Literatures of the world—these later Greek writers are on the whole less attractive than the Latin. Many are interesting, some charming, many are indispensable mines of information, but hardly any, except Menander and Theocritus, who are too near the classical period to be typical, are writers of the first-rank; and in reading them we feel that we are watching a decline, and not, as with some of the Latin writers, a new birth. The occasional germs of later developments, such as the Greek romances, are not strong enough to

countervail this feeling. Still many of them are well worth reading, and Professor Wright upon them is certainly worth reading. He expresses his opinions with his familiar vigour, and if one is sometimes tempted to challenge them, that is to the good. There are a very few mistakes or misprints, but on page 220 two different dates are given for the birth of Dion of Prusa.

The works of Titus Livius de Frulovisiis will be of interest chiefly to students of the early Renaissance and of the history of the drama. The latter will find in them seven Latin plays, five of which the editor believes to be :

The first purely secular plays imitated from the classic playwrights, yet drawing their theme from contemporary life and character, which are known to have been really performed.

They fall in date between 1330 and 1340, and were performed in Venice, where the author, a native of Ferrara, was a schoolmaster. Like other scholars of the time he seems to have been a traveller, and spent some time in England, and some of his works deal with English subjects, but they are not of great interest except to students of the period. This edition of works hitherto unpublished is scholarly and handsome. It contains a valuable introduction and some notes. Of these a more liberal allowance would be welcome, for the allusions in the plays are hard to follow without such assistance.

Dr. Barker's translation of the letters to Lucilius is preceded by an admirable life of Seneca. He has condensed into twenty-five pages a clear and most interesting account of all essential facts and his comments and judgments on doubtful points are sound and penetrating. Moreover they often have a terseness and vigour not unworthy of Seneca himself. When we come to the translation, we have, oddly enough, the feeling that we are getting not nearer to Seneca, but further away ; for Dr. Barker's natural style is in essence more truly Senecan than that in which he has chosen to translate the Letters. Take the beginning of Letter XVI :

It is, I know, self-evident to you, my dear Lucilius, that no one can live a life that's truly blessed, or even bearable, without the pursuit of wisdom, and that the perfectly blessed life is realized in the full development of wisdom, and bearable even in its inception.

Seneca is always neat and pointed, and never clumsy ; his perpetual cleverness grows wearisome, but it is attractive at first. If the sentence quoted really represented him, he could not be read with pleasure, if at all. In spite of the ' that's,' (a device which is consistently employed) it is not the natural language of a letter, nor has it the neatness of deliberate artifice. Seneca employs many colloquial turns of phrase, and uses a large number of words usually banned from literature, and Dr. Barker seems in consequence to have thought it his duty to avoid obvious artifice and to suggest a colloquial flavour. But Seneca is at bottom thoroughly artificial, and the colloquialisms are part of the artifice ; and the translator must accept the fact. Whatever else goes, the translation must not be flat or tedious.

Greek Cities excellently fulfils the purpose, mentioned in the preface, of providing photographs outside the range of familiar monuments. The sixty-four photographs are good and well chosen and often present scenes unfamiliar to most travellers in Greece. In spite of the title they show us more of Greek landscapes than of cities, ancient or modern, but this only enhances their value, for such photographs are hard to come by and it is a boon to have the physical aspect of the country brought so vividly before the eye. Any one interested at all in Greece should secure the book. The introductory essay is engagingly enthusiastic, but it and the descriptions of the

plates contain misleading statements ; e.g., we are told that the ' Soros ' at Marathen was erected over the Athenians killed in the famous battle. It is older than that.

The *Introduction to Greek History* is a very useful little book, for, in addition to a clear outline account of History, it contains information on antiquities, art, literature and so forth in a straightforward and readable form. All beginners should have it, and more advanced students may often find it handy. *The Greek Mythology* contains in a connected and readable form the kind of information needed for the understanding of mythological allusion and literature. It is unpretentious and well adapted for its purpose.

F. R. EARP

TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE

MUTINY. By CHARLES NORDHOFF and JAMES NORMAN HALL. Chapman & Hall.
7s. 6d.

ON ANCIENT CENTRAL-ASIAN TRACKS. By SIR AUREL STEIN. Macmillan.
31s. 6d.

RAGGLE-TAGGLE. By WALTER STARKIE. John Murray. 10s. 6d.

TWO very remarkable books, which may indeed turn out to have been epoch-making books, have appeared during the last few months. I refer to *Pocahontas*, by Mr. David Garnett (a book I rather disliked), and *Mutiny*, By Messrs. Charles Nordhoff and James Norman Hall. These two books, in my humble submission, may very well have made literary history. And apparently they are being widely read. Yet I am still waiting for that loud cheer of welcome from the historians—or, indeed, for a noticeable loud cheer from any quarter—which such a new and promising and obviously popular experiment must surely deserve. Of course I may be all wrong about it; but it will be a humiliating thing for this generation if it turns out that we have been sitting blinking over our contemporary sex novels and our potted historical biographies and have missed a big event, taking place before our eyes.

For what is it that these authors are trying to do? They are trying to build a new kind of bridge across the gap which separates history from romance. It is a gap which exists only in the public mind, which never should have existed at all, but which always has and always will exist so long as boys and girls refuse to learn history at school. There have been many other bridges, most of them now in a state of disrepair—in fact dangerous for traffic. There was the nineteenth century plan, successfully exploited by the Whigs, of connecting history with current controversies; and, in short, helping it down in the form of political and religious propaganda. That bridge has broken down because the present generation is at once less interested in politics and more interested in a true historical atmosphere. There is the sounder modern plan of treating history as a series of biographies—of attaining what we call “human interest” by emphasising the actors rather than the play. It is not for me to say anything against this kind of bridge; but a large part of the traffic seems to prefer to go some other way.

Then there is—or was—the historical novel, long the most popular approach to the pageant of history. How many people use it to-day? The causes of its failure are many, but may be summed up in the brief statement that it no longer *convinces*. The dialogue of its characters has become a conventional jargon, which was never spoken in any period, though the novelists apply it indiscriminately to all. Its scenery seems false, because novelists lack the knowledge (and historians the imagination) to reproduce historical “atmosphere.” And—most fatal of all perhaps—novelists make the mistake of attempting to depict in their pages the great figures of history—Shakespeare, Queen Elizabeth, Julius Caesar, Napoleon—whose stature is such that only a genius of the first rank can put conversation into their mouths without seeming to caricature them. Thus we lose the vital air of verisimilitude.

All these difficulties are skilfully avoided by the authors of the two books under consideration. In the first place they have selected comparatively obscure though picturesque episodes in English history: the rescue of John Smith by Pocahontas,

daughter of the Red Indian chief, and the famous story of the mutiny of the *Bounty*. In neither case does any really great figure cross the stage. John Smith, the founder of Virginia, inevitably plays an important part in the first book, but Mr. Garnett very wisely gives him as few "lines" as possible. The authors of the second book deal reticently with Lord Hood, who presided over the court-martial which tried the mutineers. The difficulty of inventing small talk for the great is thus avoided.

At the same time these two historical episodes happened to be unusually well documented. This is particularly true, of course, of the mutiny of the *Bounty*, in regard to which we have the stories of several survivors and the great mass of evidence produced at the trial. The result is that the authors have been able to introduce whole pages of dialogue which was sworn to have actually taken place. Nearly half the conversation in the book must be genuine—for the hero is the only imaginary character of any importance, and the authors do not let him say too much. The result is that the whole book rings true, to a quite extraordinary extent. Mr. Garnett had to invent a lot of dialogue (and chose a more difficult period for that purpose); but these authors had only to insert in the proper place, with an appropriate background and padding, the very words that were used. And it is only fair to add that when they come to the eleventh hour acquittal of their hero and are compelled to desert fact for fiction during the remaining chapters of the book, they still keep that hold on the reader—that fascination of the true story—to a surprising degree. The scene of the court-martial and of the events that followed could hardly be improved upon. If the actual "plot" becomes suddenly a little mechanical, a little over dramatised—as is the way with fiction, as opposed to truth—the narrative style retains its quality and the dialogue is almost as good as ever.

There has seldom been a better sea story than this. It is unnecessary ever to have heard of the *Bounty*, to enjoy it with such a zest as fiction cannot give. It will surely be read by every boy above the age of fourteen, and by all those grown-up boys who unaccountably blench at the sight of a history book. I will not deny that, personally, I like the real thing. Why anyone should prefer this clever re-hash to the original stories of the mutineers, and of Bligh and his gallant party in the open boat, passes my comprehension. That immortal scene as the little launch drifted away under the stern windows of the *Bounty*, hardly any food aboard and only a few cutlasses for arms; the great, gallant bear of a man, Bligh, standing up in the stern, his shirt fluttering about his knees, roaring out curses at the mutineers, whose jeering faces lined the bulwarks, while the introspective, semi-madman, Christian, glared down upon the scene from above—who wants such a picture repainted? The whitewashing of Christian by these authors I found particularly irritating and I don't think they got their swearing quite right (no one in the book says, "Damn your eyes!"). But every man to his taste. Here is a charming book, and an honest one, in a flaming paper wrapper well designed to whet the appetite, and I can heartily recommend it to all those youthful, hasty readers and those middle-aged dyspeptics whose stomachs flinch from too much solid fact. Above all, as we began by saying, such books as this seem to open up a new and inviting field for literary endeavour.

This handsome volume, *On Ancient Central Asian Tracks*, by Sir Aurel Stein, beautifully printed and illustrated, and containing some remarkable examples of colour-printing, is really an abstract of several earlier works (most of them now out of print) giving an account of the archaeological and geographical explorations, carried out by the distinguished author during the early years of this century, on three successive expeditions in Eastern Turkestan, Westernmost China, and across the Hindukush and the Pamirs. In his introduction Sir Aurel Stein explains that

the book is based on a series of lectures delivered in America at the invitation of Harvard University in which the results of his expeditions were summarised. Most of the work was carried out ten or twenty years ago, and the public memory is short ; so that it may safely be prophesied that the general reader who settles down to study this impressive work will find it not only fresh but even sensational. It was Sir Aurel Stein who first disclosed the astonishing influence of Hellenistic culture in Central Asia, where Greece, India and China seemed to meet ; he discovered several unknown languages, and a great library of six thousand documents which the experts have been busy cataloguing ever since ; and he threw light new on the military methods of Imperial China, in the days when the Chinese were still soldiers and Republican catchwords were as rare as bandits in the land. No expert knowledge is required to enjoy this book, since archaeology is becoming every day less a matter for experts, and Sir Aurel Stein always writes with clarity and precision, handling his material as efficiently as he organises his expeditions. The present volume will undoubtedly give pleasure to many who are unfamiliar with the earlier and fuller works.

Doctor Walter Starkie, who is an Irishman and loves violins and gypsy music, describes for us an adventurous journey which he made into Hungary and Transylvania as a result of a promise to a gypsy friend. He dressed in rags, carried hardly any money, and supported himself when funds ran low by playing his fiddle at humble street corners or in the gypsy camps. It was a remarkable adventure and he describes it with much humour and a kind of disdainful literary skill. The ever present danger, of course, was to fall into the style of Borrow, and it must be confessed that there is one totally unreal fight with an unreal gypsy, which is *Lavengro* to the life. But the book has a fascination all its own ; and the author has his own way of stepping delicately aside from questions of political controversy, while interjecting valuable little notes which often throw new light upon the grievances and aspirations of Magyars, Wollachs, gypsy nomads and the rest. There is an account of a gypsy funeral, in which the son of the deceased led the long procession of friends and mourners playing vigorously on his fiddle, and the subsequent ceremony in the churchyard was performed to the wild music of scores of shabby violins. Doctor Starkie gets something of the real spirit of this Hungarian gypsy music into his book.

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